

CHRIST's POWER

OVER

Bodily DISEASES.

Preached in several Sermons on

Mat. 8. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

And published for the Instruction
especially of the more Ignorant
people in the great Dutie of Pre-
paration for Sickness and Death.

By *Edward Lawrence*, M. A. Mi-
nister of the Gospel at *Baschurch* in
the County of *Salop.*

*Isaiah 38. 12. He will cut me off with pining sickness :
from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.*

*Exod. 23. 25. I will take sickness away from the midst of
thee.*

Valent mihi stillæ temporum. August.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *J. C.* for *Francis Tyton* at the
three Daggers in *Fleetstreet.* 1672.

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Charles Sturgeon

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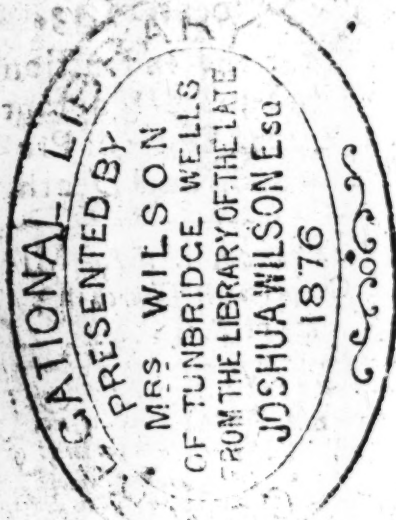
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To the Worshipful, and
my very much honoured, Ro-
bert Corbet of Stanwardine
in the Wood, in the County
of Salop Esq; and to his Re-
ligious Consort, Mrs. Eliza-
beth Corbet; together with
the rest of the Congregation
in the Parish of Baschurch,
over which the Holy Ghost
hath made me Overseer.

My very much honoured in the Lord,



THE reason of this in-
scription is not be-
cause you are prefer-
red by God, by your
birth, family, estate,
and other outward priviledges, to

The Epistle Dedicatory.

be the chief of the Inhabitants of my Parish : for although I acknowledge the Wisdom and Will of God , as the cause of this order and distinction among men ; and therefore do heartily give you the honour which belongs to you upon this account ; yet I must confess, that this is not the cause of this publick acknowledgment : But the reason is , that whereas many great persons are a great curse to their Countrey , which they fill with their own sins, and Gods Judgments ; God hath made you the blessing of your Age ; in endeavouring to fill your place with the Name, and Kingdom, and Will of Jesus Christ ; and that in the great changes of our daies, you have not, as many, *served the times , and your sins, but served the Lord, and your Generation :* And also because of your great honour, and love to the godly, able, and Orthodox Ministers

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sters of Christ, and to his holy, humble, sober, and peaceable people, which have been loathsome to others, *as the sink of the world*; but savoury to you, *as the salt of the earth*: for which although you have joyfully suffered reproach from some; yet you have had the honour, like that gracious couple, *Andronicus and Junia, to be of note among the Apostles*: And particularly, that you were of the first that called me to exercise my Ministry in this place, wherein I have by your constant favour and countenance received much comfort and encouragement: The sense of all which, together with my great joy in you, by my hopes of your being of the blessed number of those who are really joyned to Jesus Christ, and cloathed with his righteousness, and who bring forth fruit in him, (which alone can make of you a sweet savour to God, and for that

The Epistle Dedicatory.

reason precious, and acceptable to his Saints) hath caused me to signifie my sincere honour, and love, and thankfulness to you, by this Dedication. Now although I hope I write this in the singleness of my heart, as believing that God will cut off all flattering lips, and that a lying tongue is but for a moment; yet I confess it fills me with serious thoughts, to consider that this *when I am dead, will be yet speaking*: And that hereby I speak to you, as it were, in the hearing of the world; and that some whom we are bound in Christian wisdom and charity to judge as upright Saints, yet the heart-searching God may justly judge as Hypocrites; and that many who have made a greater profession of godliness then any of us, have proved fearful Apostates, when they have been tryed by Errors, Persecutions, or Preferments: I shall therefore, looking

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

ing upon my self and you as just
in our very fall into Eternity, and
as presently going to Judgment,
and with the greatest belief and
thoughts that I can get of Hea-
ven and Hell upon my heart, se-
riously beseech you (according to
the intent of this ensuing Trea-
tise) to examine your selves whe-
ther (if you were to die in the
reading of this) you have a true
Scripture-right to go to heaven;
that so you may find the Witness
of God by the word in your own
consciences, agreeing with this
publick testimony of your poor
Minister: for it is but a poor thing
for a man of so little credit, and
less worth, *to confess you before*
men; but this will be an honour
indeed, to have Jesus Christ *to*
confess you before his Father in
Heaven, on the great day of the
manifestation of the Sons of God.
And continue to live as discerning
the great difference betwixt a

The Epistle Dedicatory.

godly and ungodly man, that you may still be known by this character, to be persons *in whose eyes a vile person* (though never so great in the world) *is contemned; but to honour them* (though never so poor) *that fear the Lord*. This difference must needs be great, when I dare be bold to say, that it is beyond the tongues of men and Angels fully to express the excellency and glory of the one, and the vileness and misery of the other: And certainly the further insight you have in the Scriptures, in God and Christ, Men and Devils, Sin and Grace, Heaven and Hell, the more clearly you will know this difference. Do but look on the Godly, and Wicked, as they appear in sickness and death, and in the Day of Judgment; these put an eternal period to all other distinctions: there will be then no such difference as Prince and Subject, Landlord and Tenant,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Tenant, Rich and Poor, but one-ly Godly and Ungodly ; see the difference now, as it will appear, when, *Come ye blessed*, and *Go ye cursed* : and the right hand and left hand of Christ hath distinguished and parted the world.

Be resolved to cleave to Christ, his truth and people, through all the sufferings and stumbling-blocks which you meet with in your way to heaven: sufferings will be harder to you, then to many others : the greater your names and estates are, the greater must your graces be to enable you to part with them ; you have a greater self to deny, and a greater cross to take up : great riches, and great preferments, make many great Persecutors, and great Apostates, but few great Martyrs: you must *buy the truth*, whatever it cost you : and the more you *give for it*, the more you will *gain by it*: if you sell all for Christ, you

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you shall never complain of a dear purchase. Look with the dearest affections upon your Posterity, and believe that you will never have such an opportunity to make them happy, and to entail the blessings of God upon them, as when you are called to suffer for the sake of Christ : you may be called to make a great exchange ; either to part with your lives and estates, and to keep Christ, and heaven ; or to part with Christ, heaven, and your souls, to keep the world : if ever such a day come, look to the poor soul ; above all keeping, keep your poor souls : remembering that of our Saviour, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* Be pleased to accept this poor thing, which I humbly offer to you : give it a little room in your Study and Closet, and let the truths therein have a great place in your hearts.

Now blessed of the Lord be you,

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The Epistle Dedicatory.

and your hopeful posterity, for the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof, and especially for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.

NOW for the rest of you, *my dearly beloved, my joy, and my longed for.*

It is now thirteen years since upon your free choice and consent, I was settled to be your Minister; I mourn that I have done you no better service; yet I bless God, that I have done you no worse: Some of you are the people of *my joy*, others are the people of *my hopes*, but (God knows) you are all the people of *my love*: possibly you may not enjoy my Ministry long; though if any thing but death part us, it is like for your sakes to be one of the saddest days of my age. Some know I might have had better places both
be-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

before, and since I knew you; but I never thought my self too good for you; the Lord make me better whilst I stay, and give you a better when I am gone. You will wonder to see me appear to you thus publick; my late visitation, whereby I was *brought down to the gates of the grave, and brought up again*, was the occasion of my preaching these Sermons; and the unanimous advice of four godly, reverend, and learned Ministers, all known to you, caused their printing, without which my own private thoughts of them had never consented to have them licensed for the Press. I have devoted this little plain Treatise to the Will of God, knowing that if he put power and favour in it, it will prosper: I expect *to be scorned by some*; but if God say, *Well done*, I care not who findes fault; I had rather bear the reproaches

of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

you; of thousands, then that one poor
if too soul should lose the least spiritu-
make al and saving good, which I may
I give be a means to help him unto. I
gone. leave it with you as a testimony
e ap. of my sincere love to you, not so
; my much that you may remember
was me, but that you may remember
f the your selves, your sins, and your
e was souls; and that you may remember
these God, Christ, Heaven, Hell, Death
s ad. and Judgement, which are always
, and present before you. Brethren,
yn to I must needs witness that most of
with- you have been constant hearers of
ivate the Word, and that you have
con- many hundred Sermons to answer
d for for; but you must be *doers*, as well
l this as *hearers of the word*: the sins
Will of men, and the terrors of the
e put Lord, make me afraid that there
will is a storm rising, and I doubt
orned there will be a *great fall of ma-*
ny professors; and if you will be-
Well lieve our Saviour, you shall finde
mult; that those onely are *built on a*
aches of *rock,*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

rock, and shall certainly stand, who are both *the bearers and doers of the word*; I refer you to his own words, *Matth. 7. 24, 25, 26, 27.*

I beseech you let not the world and sin come between your hearts and Christ; let nothing keep you from heaven, which cannot keep you from hell. Now *the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant,* make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Your servant for Jesus sake,

Baschurch,

July 11. 1661.

Edward Lawrence.

Rea-



Reader,



Though nothing be more certain and common then Death, it is no common thing to be prepared for it; or else salvation would be common: As there are no Truths that are more necessary to be oft preacht and heard, then those which almost all men know; so also no duties are more necessary to be urged, then those that almost all confess, and think they practice: who will not acknowledge that preparation for death should be the daily business of our lives, and done with the first and most serious of our cares! And yet, to the shame of

To the Reader.

of corrupted humane nature, we must speak it, thousands that are uncertain to live an hour, and certain to be lost for ever, if death surprize them in the state which they are in, are as mindless of a serious preparation, and of the change which should go before that change, as if it were no part of their concernment: Methinks it is a very doleful spectacle to see men unprepared to dye, as busily taken up with impertinent diversions, as if their work were done already: One drinking, and prating, and singing in an Alehouse or Tavern, though unprepared to dye: another employed in feasting, and complement, and such company and discourse as will least trouble him with such thoughts, while yet he is unprepared to dye: another scraping for deceitful riches, or gaping and scrambling for preferment, while yet he is unprepared to dye: another quieting his carnal heart

To the Reader.

heart with meer hypocritical outside and lip-service, as if he could charm an unprepared soul into Heaven, by saying or hearing a few words : and few will know feelingly what an important work Preparation is, till the terrors of approaching death be upon them.

One of Gods means for mens preparation, is, to give his Ministers a special fitness to assist them in the work. As Christ took part with the children that were partakers of flesh and blood, Heb. 2. 14. and in all things must be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, and in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted, v. 17, 18. so that we have not an High-priest that cannot be touched with the feeling our of infirmities, Heb. 4. 15. Even so his Ministers must be mortals, frail, and subject to like passions as other men,

To the Reader.

James 5. 17. *and the treasure of the spirit must be in earthen vessels, 2 Cor. 4 7. They must be sick, that they may the better teach you to prepare for sickness; and they must be exercised in preparing for death themselves, that they may be the fitter to teach you to prepare. The God of Comfort comforteth them in all their tribulations, that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the Comfort wherewith they are comforted of God-- and whether they be afflicted or comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Even when they are pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch as they despair of life, they receive the sentence of death in themselves, that they may not trust in themselves, but in God that raised the dead-- that thanks may be given by many on their behalf, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11. Whereas those that are insensible of their nearness to eternity,*
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To the Reader.

and in healthful prosperity grow secure, are like to be no lively feeling Preachers, nor fit to waken others to that serious preparation, which they are wilful strangers to themselves : but rather like to be corrupted with ambition, worldliness, idleness, flesh-pleasing, man-pleasing, superficialness, formality, and trifling in Religion, and vexing the Church with their contentions about their Ceremonies and Opinions, till the approach of death do help them to juster apprehensions, and bring them to such confessions as Bishop Ridley made to Hooper in his imprisonment. Thou hast here in this Treatise the whole some savoury fruit of sickness : This servant of the Lord was cast down and delivered, to teach him how to teach thee to prepare. The subject is of such universal usefulness, and yet fully handled by so few, so needful to be much studied in health, and the Book so fit for the

To the Reader.

reading of the sick, or for those friends to read to them that are about them, or visit them, that (though urgent business prohibited me to read it all; yet having perused the most of it, and observed the scope and spirit of the work,) I think it my duty to recommend it to thy thankful acceptance and improvement; assuring thee, (upon long experience of the benefits of a dying life) that the time is at hand, when the studies of death, and thy everlasting state, will appear to have been more necessary and wise, then all those impertinences that now divert distracted worldlings, and are but the seed of endless sorrows.

Thy Brother in the Patience
and Hope of Believers,

August 1.
1661.

Richard Baxter.

Matth.



Matth. 8. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

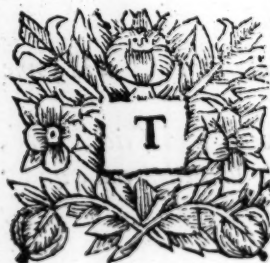
5. *And when Jesus was entred into Capernaum, there came unto him a Centurion, beseeching him,*
6. *And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the Palsie, grievously tormented.*
7. *And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.*
8. *The Centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.*
9. *For I am a man under Authority, having Souldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it.*
10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.*
11. *And I say unto you, that many shall*
B 3 *come*

Christ's Power over

come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.

12. But the children of the Kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13. And Jesus said unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.



THE mighty Hand of God, which hath of late come upon me, whereby (I must bear him witness that) he hath in his Fatherly Wisdom, and Goodness, and Faithfulness visited me, hath caused me to wink a little at the *pomp* and *bravery* of this world, and to set before my eyes the ghastly sight of those many Beds of Sickness, wherein the poor children of men lie languishing: I have seriously thought what a poor Creature Man is, when he lies gasping under the power and torture of a disease; and withall have considered how little a Consumption,

Bodily Diseases.

3

sumption, or a Fever, or the Small Pocks, or any other disease, cares for the strength, or wealth, or youth, or beauty of a man. I have seen the great changes which these make in Nations, and Cities, and Families, and Persons where they are sent. I have endeavoured to stand at the Door of Eternity, looking on these Messengers, carrying multitudes before me out of this into the other world. The Grave, *that House of Darknesh* tells me, These bring my *ghastly Inhabitants* to lodge in me; the Worms say, These bring our *Brethren* and *Sisters* unto us; Hell from beneath cries, These have turned multitudes of *damned Souls* into me; and Heaven from above cries, These have brought many *blessed Spirits* into me.

Upon these, and other considerations, I have desired for my own, and others good, to see clearly out of whose hands all *sicknesses* and *diseases* come, that I may acknowledge my self, and assert and testify unto others, the absolute Command and Dominion which God and Jesus Christ have over all these things; the true knowledge and improvement whereof, may have a powerful influence upon us in our *health*, to make us daily look and prepare for *sickness*; and

in our *sickness* to make us fit to *live*; or fit to *die*: and when we are restored to *health*, to teach us to whose *Will* and *Glory* we should live; and to make us ready for *sickness* and *death*, when they return; and by all, to cause us to hasten into that *blessed state*, and to live in that gracious *frame*, that both in life and health, sickness and death, we may have always a plain passage, and a clear and safe entrance into that everlasting Kingdom of Glory, which is alway set open before us. For these ends I have chosen this Text, which is full of this Argument, *viz.* to prove that all sicknesses and diseales, are under the Command of Jesus Christ. This Scripture is recorded by two Evangelists; by *Matthew* in the place before-mentioned, and by *Luke*, *Cap. 7.* from *ver. 1.* to *ver. 11.* they differ chiefly in two things.

1. *Luke* makes a more prolix and large relation then *Matthew*; and therefore we read some things there, not mentioned here.

2. *Matthew* speaks as if the Centurion came, and spake to *Christ* in *Person*, v. 5, 6. but *Luke* tells us expressly, that he sent unto him the *Elders of the Jews*, v. 3. and after sent other friends to meet him, v. 6. This difference

difference hath made some conceive, that they are distinct Relations of two distinct Miracles; but without ground: for it is ordinary to speak of that which a man doth by others, as if he did it by himself; as the words which *John* the Baptist spake by his Disciples, are mentioned as if he had spoken them himself, *Matth.* 11. 2, 3.

So the Evangelist here reports, that the Centurion came to Christ, beseeching him; meaning, not that he came in person, but that he came and spake by his messengers, as *St. Luke* explains it: and thus the two Evangelists are reconciled. Now why the Centurion came not to Christ in person; whether it was, because he thought he had no right to come for such a mercy, being a Gentile; or whether the sense of his unworthiness made him afraid or ashamed to come; or what other reason there was, because it cannot certainly be known, therefore it is not wisdom too curiously to enquire.

The Text is a Narration of Christs miraculous healing the Centurions servant of a deadly disease, upon the faith and prayer of his good Master. There are three main things which make up the subject of this Narration.

1. The

1. The Servants mortal disease.
2. The Masters miraculous Faith.
3. Christs Miraculous Cure.

In the whole, observe these four particulars.

1. Here is the Centurions servant lying diseased, *ver. 6. Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the Palsie, grievously tormented. Luke saith, Cap. 7. 2. He was sick, ready to die.* The person thus visited, was a servant: in *Matthew*, the Centurion is said to call him *ο παις μου*, which may be translated, *my child*; for the word is ambiguous, signifying either a child, or a servant: but in *Luke* he is called *δουλός* a servant; yet it is said, a servant who was dear to him: and it seems, by considering both together, that he was a good, faithful, and obedient servant, and therefore as dear to his Master as his child.

I shall take occasion from hence to call upon servants to do the Will of God in their Relation: Servants, labour in all faithfulness, and diligence, to honour your Masters; keep up their Authority in your Souls, and let your whole carriage favour of a heart that willingly, cheartfully, and humbly yields up it self in obedient subjection thereunto: *1 Pet. 2. 18. Servants, be subject to your Masters with all fear. 1 Tim.*

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6. 1. Let servants count their own Masters worthy of all honour.

1. Consider the Family where thou livest is Jesus Christs; he is the Great Master of every Family; and he hath given Authority to the Master of the Family where thou dwellest to be his *Vicegerent* therein, and to bear his Image and Authority, and to rule in his stead: therefore as thou art a Christian, and so to honour Christ by believing in him, and by rejoycing in him, and by doing his Will; so the honour thou owest to Jesus Christ, as thou art a servant, is to honour, and serve, and obey thy Master in him: The Apostle requires the obedience of servants to their Masters for this very reason, Col. 3. 23, 24. *And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. — For ye serve the Lord Christ.*

Servants, believe that you are threshing for Christ, and plowing for Christ, and spinning for Christ; this will make you do your service heartily, when you consider that you are therein serving the Lord Christ; and this will make you afraid of disobeying, and despising your Masters, when you consider that you do thereby, as much as in you lies, depose the Authority of Jesus Christ from ruling and governing in the Family.

2. Con-

Christ's Power over

2. Consider, that you do hereby adorn the Gospel of Christ ! This is the Apostles argument , Tit. 2. 10. *That they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* What Doctrine this is , appears by the following words, the Doctrine of the *Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation.* Oh how should this prevail with you , to consider, that when in conscience to God you are faithful, diligent, quiet , and obedient servants , you are a precious Ornament to the Gospel of Jesus Christ ! The Gospel is honoured , not only by Ministers when they preach the Gospel , and by Martyrs when they die for the Gospel ; but also by poor servants , when they live in their service, as those who are ruled by the Gospel : therefore believe the Glory of Jesus Christ, as it is revealed, and appears in the Gospel ; and then own and honour the Face , and Image, and Authority of the same Christ, as it shines in thy Master , whom he hath placed to bear his Authority over thee.

3. Consider, that faithful servants are exceeding precious to Jesus Christ : Thou thinkest it a sad case, that thou must spend all thy daies to toil and drudge like a poor servant ; but consider the Apostle , 1 Cor.

7. 21. *Art thou called being a servant ? care*

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not for it : never let that trouble thee, that thou art a servant : And the Apostle gives this reason for thy comfort, *vers. 22. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lords free-man.* When many a gallant Lord and Lady is a servant to sin, and a slave to the Devil, and stands bound to suffer the wrath of God for ever ; thou that art but a poor godly servant, and art bound to men ; yet thou art set free from Sin, and Satan, and Hell, and hast a sure right to all the priviledges of Believers ; though thou art in this mean relation of a servant amongst men, yet thou standest in all the glorious relations to Jesus Christ : a poor servant, and a King and Priest to God : a poor servant, and a Wife and Brother of Jesus Christ : a poor servant, and a glorious Heirot of the Kingdom of Heaven. I tell thee, though thou art but a poor servant, yet godliness will put such a *grace* upon thee, as to make thee a glory to Christ, a crown and joy to thy Minister, a delight to Gods people, a terrour to the greatest wicked man about thee, and a very torment to the Devil of Hell.

Lastly, consider, that this is thy particular way, wherein thou art called to please and honour God, and to work out thy own salvation.

Christs Power over

vation, *Psal. 37. 23. The steps of a good man* (be he never so poor) *are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way.* It was an high and holy saying of one, That a poor Milkmaid walking in obedience to God in her calling, doth bring more glory to God then heaven and earth. There is no duty which thou art bound unto, as a man, or as a Christian, which hinders thee in thy duty to God and man, as thou art a servant: for Gods commandments do not cross and interrupt one another; and we cannot sin against Gods Will, whilst we are doing his Will; and true Grace will make thee a gracious servant, as well as a gracious Christian: the same faith and love which causes thee to believe in, and to cleave unto Jesus Christ, will cause thee to see, and to love, and to obey his will and authority in thy Master: So that when thou art most faithful, and diligent, and obedient in thy service, thou wilt finde most freedom and sweetness in Prayer, in Sermons, in singing Psalms, and in feeding upon the Lords supper. The Apostle requires all servants to be filled with this principle, in their walking obediently to their Masters: *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of inheritance,* Col. 3. 24. teaching all servants

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to walk in their Callings so, as those that know, that this is their way to heaven: Ah poor servants, rejoyce in your *work*, for heaven is your *wages*; and let me tell you, that you are never like to see a fairer way to heaven, then you have now you are servants: you will finde, if ever you come to be husbands, and wives, and parents, and rulers of families, that it is harder to *rule* then to *obey*.

Now there are amongst many other excuses, these three things, which servants pretend, to excuse their irreverence and disobedience to their Masters, which I shall briefly answer, and then proceed.

First, the servant will plead that his Master is a poor man; if he were as rich and great a man, as some other Masters are, then I would honour him; but he is poor, and I am come of as good friends as he.

Ans^r. Though thy Master be poor and mean, yet he stands in the place, and bears the authority of the great and glorious God: and if thou seest reason to obey a Master because he is rich, and seest no reason in the authority of God upon him, and in the command of God upon thee to obey a poor Master, it is a sad signe that thou dost honour riches more then God.

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Christs Power over

Secondly, but my Master is a wicked man, and then how can I honour him and obey him?

Ans. Thy Master indeed cannot binde thee to sin against God: for it can in no case be a mans duty to hate God, and to damn his own soul; yet when thou disobeyest his sinful commands, let it appear, that this is not to *cross* thy Master, but to *please* God: and though he be wicked, yet still honour and obey him in the Lord, and own the image and authority of Christ upon him, which is holy and good.

Lastly, my Master is so friendly, that he looks for no such reverence: he allows me to be bold, and to be fellow-like with him.

Ans. This is thy Masters sin, who is bound to keep up that order, which God in wisdom hath appointed; and he cannot give away the authority of Jesus Christ, nor loose thee from thy duty, whereby God hath bound thee to honour, and reverence, and obey him.

So much for the first Particular, *viz.* the Centurions servant lyes diseased.

Secondly, Here is the care of the good Master over his faithful servant; the servant lyes gasping at the door of death, and the Master lyes praying for him at the door
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of mercy, ver. 5, 6. *He came beseeching him, saying, &c.*

Here is an example for all Masters, to teach them to be tender, and careful of, and to use all good means for the healing of their sick servants; as the good Centurion doth here, whose fatherly care and love towards his dear dying servant, appears in four things.

1. He keeps him at home.

2. He is full of compassion towards him, being sensible of his grief; therefore (saith he) *he lies grievously tormented*; his bowels earned towards him, and he useth words to move the bowels of Jesus Christ.

3. He useth the best means in the world for his cure; he seeks help of Jesus Christ, and exerciseth all the might of his Soul, in praying for, and believing a Miracle for the healing of his poor servant. You that are Masters, learn here your duty; consider you have men and women to your servants, made after the same Image of God with your selves; let not then such a workmanship of God perish by your cruelty, covetousness, or negligence. They are Christian servants; Christ paid as dear for servants, as for Masters; they are all bought with the same price, 1 Cor. 7. 23.

Your poor servants have need of further season for repentance, and to work out their salvation; therefore let not them by your negligence be hastned into eternity: your servants sickness is an affliction from God upon you; he lays this burden on your family; therefore submit to him, and wait upon him in the use of means to remove it; and ease not thy self by thy sin, to bring a worse burden upon thy conscience. Consider further, your estate is Gods, and you use it for him in a relieving a sick servant; and I dare say, neither you, nor your children, shall be the poorer, by exercising such charity. To conclude, consider that of the Apostle, Col. 4. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in Heaven.* Now this is one thing, which by the Law of God, and the Law of Humanity and Charity, is just and equal, that Masters use all good means in their power, for the health, and ease, and life of a sick servant; and this you must do, as *knowing that you have a Master in Heaven*, to whom all the wrong, and injustice, and unmercifulness which you shew to your servants, will cry for vengeance against you; therefore think with thy self, as *Job* did in the like case,

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Chap. 31. 14. *What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?*

Here is one thing more for all servants to learn; that is, to chuse to live in families where God is worshipt: What a mercy was it to this sick servant, that he had a Master that prayed for him! Certainly it would much promote Family-worship, if servants would not chuse to live in a prayer-lefs family. I know it's a dishonour to God, a reproach to Religion, and a wrong to servants, that in many families there is used such unseasonable times for family-worship: I do therefore seriously advise all Masters of Families, into whose hands this shall come, to order your business so, as to make that your ordinary set time to worship God, when you are like to be in the best frame; and I am perswaded you will finde, when once you have wisely set your season for morning and evening worship, and diligently observed it, that in a short time your business will ordinarily fall so, as at those times to leave room for those duties; however, chuse your *own time* for family-worship, and not your *servants time*; rather when your servants should *work*, then when they should *sleep*; and

let all servants make it their choice to dwell in such families, where they are most like to be helped forward in their way to heaven.

Observ. 3. Christs answer to the Centurions prayer for his sick servant, ver. 7. *And Jesus said, I will come and heal him:* He offers his presence to come, and his power and mercy to heal him; he grants more than the Centurion begs. Observe, *God often gives more, but never less than believers sincerely ask;* Eph. 3. 20. *He is able (and willing) to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think:* for the power and goodness of God, is infinitely above the highest Faith of the greatest Believer; we can pray but like men, but he gives like an Infinite God. Now Christ offers to come to his house, as it appears, to set awork the Centurions faith: for this passage, *I will come*, gives occasion for the following words, wherein he pleads two things against Christs coming to his house.

1. His own unworthiness, ver. 8. *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.* Wherein we may see the gracious modesty of this great Believer: when he hath the highest thoughts of God, he hath the lowest thoughts of himself: this is *Fidei ingenium,*

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genium, as one calls it, *the ingenious property of Faith*: by it, when a Believer doth most exalt God, he doth most abase himself.

2. He pleads, that it was unnecessary for Christ to trouble himself to come to his house, for he could heal him by speaking a word: *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* Herein he acknowledgeth the Godhead of Jesus Christ, whose peculiar Prerogative it is to speak creating words, Psal. 33. 9. *He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*: And this truth, that Jesus Christ could by speaking a word, command and create the cure, he proves by an argument taken from the less to the greater, ver. 9. *For I am a man under Authority, having Souldiers under me, &c.* You may easily see the strength of this argument in this plain Paraphrase; *I am but a man*, and thou art the true God; *I am under Authority*, but all the power in Heaven, and in Earth, is thine; *I have Souldiers and servants under me*, and thou hast all things under thee. Now (saith he) if I bid my Souldier go and march to such a place, he goes: and if I command another to come from quartering in such a place, he comes: and if I say to my servant, Do such a business, he doth it. Thus all sicknesses

and diseases are under thy command: if thou sayst to a Fever, Go and turn the moisture of such a one into the drought in Summer, it goes; and to the Consumption, Go and rot the Lungs, and eat up the flesh of such a one, it goes; and to the Palsie, Go and torment such a one, it goes; and if thou commandest back a disease, and sayest, Come away, and spare the life of such a one, it presently comes. And again, if thou biddest any disease Do this, make such a Father Childless, such a Wife a Widow, such Children Fatherless, it presently doth it. And thus he wisely and strongly pleads, that all diseases are at the Will of Jesus Christ; so that a word from him makes them *go and come, and do what he will.*

Obs. 4. Christ's carriage after the Centurions speech, ver. 10. *When Jesus heard it, he marvelled:* That must needs be a marvellous Faith, which makes Jesus Christ himself to marvel.

2. He highly commends the Centurions Faith: *I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.* There are three things which speak the greatness of his Faith.

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it with, and preferring it before the Faith of his *Israel*; saying, *I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel.*

2. Because he did believe a great truth: this is a great truth, worthy of thy strongest faith to be exercised in, that Jesus Christ is that God who commands and rules all the diseases and sicknesses of men,

3. Because of the great power and life which appeared in the grace it self: now the might and strength of his faith is seen, both because by it he saw the substance of the truth with so much evidence, and clearness, and certainty, as he did: he did as plainly see, that Christ had the command of diseases, as that he himself had the command of his Souldiers and servants. Beloved, the stronger faith is, the more plain and piercing insight it hath into its object; and the great power of his faith appeared in believing this truth at such a time, when the infinite power and Eternal Godhead of Christ was so little known and believed in the world. And lastly, by the strong pleadings of his heart, grounded upon this truth, whereby he draws virtue and power from Christ to heal his dying servant: So that you see great reason why our Saviour commends the greatness of the Centurions faith.

Christ's Power over

3. Our Saviour from hence takes occasion to teach the Doctrine of the Conversion of the Jews, and Rejection of the Gentiles, ver. 11, 12. and Christ makes this seasonable digression into this Doctrine, because at this time a poor Gentile excels ever a Jew of his age in believing the power of Jesus Christ.

Lastly, Christ commands the sick servants cure; he speaks such a word as the Centurion did pray that he would, and believe that he could speak, ver. 13. *And Jesus said unto the Centurion, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee: and his servant was healed in the self-same hour.* And thus Christ is honoured for his Miracle, the Centurion is honoured for his Faith, and the poor dying servant hath the comfort of both.

I shall now pass by all other Observations that may be made out of this Text, and only insist upon this one Doctrine, which I have chosen to be the subject of this discourse, viz.

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Doct. **T***hat all sicknesses and diseases are at the will, and under the command and government of Jesus Christ, so that he bids them go and come, and do what he will to the children of men.*

This Doctrine is grounded upon the Centurions pleading with Christ, that all diseases were under his command and government, as the Centurions souldiers were under him; and also upon this, that Christ testifies the truth of this, in commending the Centurion for the greatness of his faith in believing this truth, and improving it as he did.

To prevent the misunderstanding of this Doctrine, I shall premise these three Cautions.

1. That I do not hereby deny the power and influence that inferiour causes may have in bringing diseases upon us; for I know that many sicknesses come from God through the hands of Angels and Devils; and that other men, and also our selves, and that unwholesome dyet, the seasons of the years, and divers other things, may be the instruments

instruments and means of diseases unto us; but yet God is the first and chiefest cause of all diseases; for it is not in the power of any creature to suspend or with-hold that Divine Power and influence which causeth our health; but this is continued, or denied unto us, according to the will and pleasure of God: and no creature can cause our trouble without God; for without him a creature can neither be, nor work, but falls to nothing, and so cannot do good or evil.

2. I do not exclude the Art of Physitians, nor deny the virtue that is in any medicines for the healing of diseases; knowing that the same God who had ordained food for our health, hath also ordained physick for us in our sickness: but still the first and chief of all is Jesus Christ.

3. I do not exclude the power of God the Father, or of God the holy Ghost: but because I finde that by diseases God doth execute great judgements in the world, and that he is pleased to make great use of these in his government, both of his Church, and of his enemies; and that *the Father hath committed all judgement to the Son*, Joh. 5. 22. and because this command and government is ascribed to Christ in the Text, therefore I shall

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shall frequently mention the name and authority of Jesus Christ, God Redeemer, in this case.

Now in the handling of the Doctrine, I shall follow this familiar method.

1. I shall explain the terms.

2. I shall shew for what ends Jesus Christ doth thus cause and command diseases.

Lastly, I shall make Use and Application.

For the first : In the explication, I shall tell you what I mean by sicknesses ; and then explain the exercise of Christs government and command of diseases , in those acts of it which are mentioned in the Text, viz. his commanding diseases *to go and come, and do this.*

By sicknesses I mean all those evils which are sent by Christ to disease the bodies of living men and women : The author of diseases is Jesus Christ ; the formal nature of them is their diseasing the bodies of men, depriving them of health, strength, ease, &c. and afflicting them with pain and grief, &c. the subjects of these sicknesses are the bodies of living men and women : hereby they are distinguished from the wounds and troubles of the soul so far as they are onely spiritual ; but those bodily diseases which are the

the effects of the wounds and wastings of the soul, are also comprehended herein; they are hereby distinguished also from that corruption which corrupts the body after death; and herein are implied all manner of bodily diseases, as wounds, hurts, sores, breaking of bones, &c. I shall speak of these under this formal consideration, as Jesus Christ is the cause, and ruler, and healer of them, and so they come within the subject of Divinity, and not of Medicine or Chyrurgery.

I now come to explain the exercise of Christs government of diseases in those three particulars mentioned in the Text.

1. Christ bids diseases go, and they go. Take the meaning of this,

1. In general, 2. In some particulars.

First, in general: these words, *Go, and they go*, are words whereby God works what he speaks; he immediately creates what he commands, like those words at the creation: *Let there be light, and there was light*: thus he spake, and it was done, *Esal. 33. 9.* and so the meaning is, that it is the will and power of God, which causeth all diseases to come upon us. Hence David calls the peoples falling into the Pestilence, a falling into the hand of God, *2 Sam. 24. 14. Let*

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ings of *we fall into the hand of the Lord* : and in his
 herein own visitation he cries out, *Psal. 38. 2. Thy*
 in that *hand presseth me sore.* And *Psal. 39. 10.*
 after *I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.* Be-
 manner loved, God hath a heavy hand, he gives a
 fores, *great blow* ; what is the greatest man in the
 ak of world, when God can strike him to hell at
 a, as a blow ? So sicknesses are called Gods ar-
 and rows, *Job 6. 4. The arrows of the Almighty*
 within *are within me.* *Psal. 38. 2. Thy arrows stick*
 icine *fast in me.* God hath his Quiver full of
 these Arrows, full of the Pestilence, of Fe-
 vers, and Dropsies, and Consumptions, and
 all manner of Diseases ; and he shoots these
 Arrows into our Families, Friends and Chil-
 dren ; and none but himself can pull them
 out : as the Keeper shoots his barbed Ar-
 row into the Deer, and he runs, and leaps,
 and lyes down, but the Arrow sticks still :
 so God shoots, suppose a Consumption into
 the lungs of a man, or the Gout into the
 limbs of a man ; and the poor man walks,
 and eats, and sleeps, but the Arrow sticks
 still : Friends pull, and Physicians pull ; but
 he may say with *David, Thy arrows stick fast*
in me. Thus, beloved, all diseases are subject
 to the will of God, so as to go upon any
 man at his appointment. Sinner, if thou
 wilt not do the Will of God thy self, God
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hath the Stone, Gout, Strangury, and millions of Diseases more, to do his will upon thee : for as it's observable that there is a passive obediential power in every creature to yeild to the will and power of God to be what he will, as a stone to be turned into a childe of *Abraham* : So there is an active obediential power in every creature, whereby it is ready to be an instrument of Gods power to do what he will : if he say to the earth, Open thy mouth, and swallow up such a company ; it presently opens, and becomes a great grave to bury them all alive, as in that dreadful judgement mentioned, *Numb. 16*. So if God say to the thunder-bolt, Smite such a person, he is presently shattered in pieces ; and in the same cases the heavens, seas, winds, fire, and all creatures obey him : so that if God set on a flie, a spider, an hair of the head against a man, all the care and power in the world cannot save him. So, my Brethren, if God command the Pestilence, Fever, small-Pox, to go into such a City, or such a Family, or upon such a person, they presently fasten upon them, though all the world be against it.

More particularly in Gods bidding diseases go, and they go, there is implied these five things.

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First, He commands *whatsoever* diseases he will to go, and they go ; the Centurion hath his hundred of Souldiers and he sends whom he will, and he goes : so our Lord of hosts hath as many sicknesses as he himself will make at his command, and whichsoever he appoints to go, it presently goes : Beloved, many cry out of their diseases, as the Church of her sorrows, *Lam. 1. 12. Is there any sorrow like my sorrow ! is there any sickness like my sickness !* we are too apt to complain with the Israelites, that *the way of the Lord is not equal*, Ezek. 18. 25. We are forward to judge the best of our selves, and the worst of our afflictions : but we must know, that God doth in great justice and wisdom choose and single out what diseases he will visit us with ; he *corrects with judgement*, Jer. 10. 24. and therefore God checks the impatience of *Job* thus, *Job 40. 8. Will thou disdain my judgement ? wilt thou make nothing of my judgement, which in wisdom and counsel I exercise in all my visitations ?* So that whatever disease comes upon us, our hearts and wills should agree with the Will of God therein : for the difference betwixt thy affliction and others, is made by the Wisdom and Will of Christ ; he hath chosen and appointed this,

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as the fittest disease for thee; and it is a signe thou wilt be discontent with another affliction, if thou quarrel with this: therefore labour to be so filled with the Will of Christ in thy visitation, as to conclude that this is the best sickness for thee, and the fittest disease for thee; and this is the good servant, which Christ in wisdom hath sent to do him service upon thee, and to bring him glory from thee.

2. To *whomsoever* Christ bids diseases go, *they go*; as when the Centurion commands his servant *to go*, it is implied that he appoints him whither *to go*. So (my Brethren) as God doth pick and choose which arrows he will shoot, so he doth not, like the man in the *Syrian Camp*, 1 *Kings* 22. 34. draw his bow *at a venture*, but in great wisdom marks, and singles out the persons in whom he will strike these arrows. See *Psal.* 91. 7. *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousands at thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh unto thee*; whereby it appears that God directs and determines the Pestilence to whom it shall go, and the same power he hath over all other diseases; which are the instruments of his power to do his Will: and this is clear; for every instrument is over-ruled, and limited by

by the will and power of him who works with it ; so that although there be an equal aptness in the instrument to do one thing as well as another, yet it is determined in its work, according to the pleasure of him that guides it : as if a man go with an ax into the wood to fell his trees , there is an equal aptness in the ax to cut down one tree as well as another ; but it is at the pleasure, and in the power of him that works with it, to determine which tree shall stand, and which shall fall. So (my Brethren) sicknesses are the instruments of Gods power to do his will, and are equally apt to diseased one as well as another ; but they being all in his hands, and over-ruled and guided by him, they onely go and afflict those to whom he sends and appoints them : God sends the Pestilence into a City ; now the hand of God carries it into what street, or family, or person he will : It is observable, that God makes great use of diseases to do his Will, and to serve his designe in the ruine of his enemies, and salvation of his people ; and therefore they must needs be ordered by God, where they may work most for his glory ; as for example , God sees how *men of the earth* (as great worldlings are called, *Psal. 10. ult.*) fill a Nation or Coun-

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try, either with Errour and Heresie, or with Atheism and Prophaness; and these men *lift up the horn on high*, Psal. 75. 5. crying, *Who is lord over us?* Psal. 12. 4. as if neither God nor man durst speak to them: now it's for Gods honour to shew himself above such; and therefore he baffles *Job* with this argument, That he can look on every one that is proud, and abase him; and that he can tread down the wicked in his place. Oh you proud Nimords, you mighty Hunters, you are out of your place, you must come lower; God will have you under his feet shortly, and will tread you down in your place. See *Job* 40. 11, 12. Now as a proof of this power and glory of God, he often sends a Fever, or a Consumption, or some other disease, and then down falls the great Gallant groaning under the power and torture of his sickness; and then look what a sight is here: here are magnificent Buildings, pleasant Gardens, pamper'd Horses, &c. but the great Master lyes languishing in the midst of all: and now the great talk of this mighty man is come to this, *Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.* Again, sometimes God looks upon

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upon a beautiful person ; and sees him, as it were, turning his own Phansie into a Looking-glass, wherein he is always looking, and admiring, and pleasing himself with his beauty : Well (saith God) to a Consumption, Go, and wither yonder pretty flower; and it goes, *and presently his beauty consumes away like a moth* : Or else saith God to the small-Pocks, or some other disease, Go, *and it goes*, and scorns and shames his beauty : and now *the wounds stink, and are corrupt, and the body is filled with a loathsome disease*, Psal. 38. 5, 7. *and there is burning instead of beauty*, as it is said in another case; Isa. 3. 24. So sometimes a Minister hath but one or two malicious enemies in a Parish ; and God commands a disease to fetch away them: and what welcome such have in eternity, they are like to know best, that have a minde to try it.

Sometimes a Minister hath a gracious man or woman in a Parish, which are to him as that gracious couple, *Aquila and Priscilla* were to *Paul*, his *helpers in the Lord*, Rom. 16. 3. and when many a malicious Atheist lives, it is the good will of God that they dye.

Sometimes parents have but one childe, and God denies to lend them that. Some-

Christs Power over

times there is but one Life in a Living, and a disease comes by the appointment of Christ, and spares all the rest of the Family, and takes away that; but one good *Abijah* in a house, and God calls away him: Thus all diseases go to whomsoever they are sent and appointed by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, *Whensoever* Christ commands a disease to go, it goes: This is also plainly implied in the Centurions speech; for if he have authority to bid his souldiers go, it must be at his own pleasure, when he will bid them go: now it is clear that Jesus Christ hath this authority over all diseases; both because he is a free agent, and therefore works when he will upon his creatures; and because every thing whose acting depends on the power and pleasure of another, works onely then when it is his pleasure to work with it: as an arrow onely flies then when the archer will shoot it; so diseases, which as you have heard are Gods arrows, can onely hit us, and hurt us, when it is Gods will to shoot them into our bodies. Beloved, God is the Lord of our times: the belief of which comforted *David*, when his enemies were conspiring his death, *Psal.* 31. 13, 14, 15. *I trusted in the Lord, I said, Thou art my God, my times are in thy hands*

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bands, not in my enemies hands : It is sweet satisfaction to see clearly our times of life, and peace, and health, and sickness in Gods hands ; we shall never be sick till our Father be willing to make us sick ; he fills our times with what changes he will. It is observable, that in Gods working towards Nations, or Families, or Persons, he hath in his determinate counsel appointed an *unchangeable method of providence*, and in infinite wisdom hath set a fit nick of time for every dispensation ; so that the glory and beauty of the Providence is much seen in the season of it : So in this case God hath set the times for the several changes in the life of man, Job 7.1. *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth ?* and in all diseases, his wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy is glorified in the season of the Visitation. Sometimes God smites a childe in the womb, and the poor mother carries a *dead corpse* instead of a *living childe* : And thus the body and soul are no sooner united, but presently parted again ; and so multitudes flie from the womb into heaven and hell.

Some die in their full strength, Job 21.23. We see many when they were most like to live, they presently dye ; and like the strings

of an instrument, break when they are beft in tune.

Sometimes when men stand upon the foot of pride, Pfal. 36. 11. *they are suddenly taken in their pride*, Pfal. 59. 11. and fo fall suddenly from the top of pride to the bottom of hell. See a fit instance of this, *Acts* 12. 21, 22, 23. *Herod* makes a popular Oration, and the flattering multitude shout and cry, *It is the voice of God, and not of man*: and the Lord suddenly smites him with a strange difeafe, and there lyes the Royal Orator, as it were, in the fame breath, *deified* by men, and *devoured* by worms.

Sometimes a Father is too fond of a childe, and the very might and ftrengh of his heart, which might be better exercifed in the love and fervice of God and *Jesus Chrift*, is vainly wafte and fpend in the inordinate love and delight which he takes in his childe: then God bids a difeafe go, and it prefently leaves a fatherlefs childe, or a childelefs father.

Sometimes, when godly men are ripe for glory, fo that with *Paul* they have *finifhed their courfe*, 2 Tim. 4. 7. then God doth finifh their time, and fends a ficknefs as a messenger to fetch them home, as a *fhock of corn in its feafon*, Job 5. 26. There are mul-
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titudes of other seasons, wherein God chu-
seth to visit his people; which considerate
Christians may observe, and dilate, and am-
plifie upon in their own thoughts.

4. *How often soever* Christ commands
diseases *to go, they go*: this we may also ga-
ther from the Centurions speech: for by
vertue of the same authority by which he
bids his souldiers go once, he bids them
go as oft as he sees reason to command
them. So by the same power that Jesus
Christ causeth diseases at any time, he can
cause them as often as he will: for his pow-
er being unchangeable, is not spent in any
work; but it is the same after as before,
Heb. 13. 8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday,
and to day, and for ever: and his power be-
ing infinite, there is never any thing to hin-
der, but he can do what he will. Hence
many times diseases come thick upon us,
Job 10. 17. Thou renewest thy witnesses a-
gainst me: by witnesses he means diseases,
as well as other afflictions, which God re-
news at his pleasure. So *Job 16. 14. He*
breaketh me with breach upon breach: when
persons are sick, we usually say of them as
David speaks of himself, *Psal. 38. 8. They*
are sore broken: and it is God that thus
breaketh them with breach upon breach;

with one breach after another. Beloved, when God begins to trouble us, we are usually like Mariners on the seas, one wave of affliction comes rolling after another: Perhaps God first smites us in a blast, then in a childe, then in our selves. *David* elegantly describes this, *Psal. 42. 7. Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and billows are gone over me:* As at the noise of thunder or rain from the clouds, which are Gods *water-spouts*, the Brooks, as it were, call on the Clouds, Come and fill us; and the Rivers call unto the Brooks, Come ye and raise us: Or, as in a terrible storm at Sea, one wave calls to another, Come and roll after me; and that to another, Come and follow me: so one deep affliction calls to another to follow it; the Ague cries to the Fever, Follow me; and the Fever to the Consumption, Follow me; and the Consumption to Death, Follow me. And thus *all Gods waves and billows go over us*; so that a man may say with *Heman, Psal. 88. 7. Thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.* And thus the day of our life is like a stormy day, wherein are some shining gleams, and then storms follow one another all the day; and therefore as souldiers in a garrison, when they have gallantly beaten back one storm

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storm of the enemy, do not presently throw down their arms, and dismantle the garrison; but they make up their breaches, and keep up their Guards and Centinels, to be ready for a more desperate assault: So when one affliction is past, when one disease is healed, let us be prepared for another, till we have accomplished our warfare. I refer you for more of this, to the Application.

Lastly, *How long soever* God appoints a disease to stay, it will continue upon us: this is also implied in the Centurions speech. For by the same Authority that he commands a Souldier to go to a place, he can appoint him to stay till he give order for his return: So Jesus Christ can as long as he will, continue the exercise of the same power which first caused the disease, upon the exercise of which must needs follow the continuance of the disease: and therefore we often see, that some man continues in a sickly and dying condition for many years together, so that their *lives hang in doubt*, as it is said, *Deut. 28. 66.* they live, as it were, between the two Worlds, being neither *well* enough to live, nor *sick* enough to die. This (it seems) was *Hemans* case, *Psal. 88. 15. I am afflicted,*
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and ready to dye from my youth up : Thus Job tells us, cap. 7. 3. *I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me ; whilst some are in their sweet and refreshing sleep, they little dream what wearisome nights others spend on their beds of languishing, crying out with Job in the next verse, When I lye down, I say, When shall I arise , and the night be gone ? and I am full of tossing to and fro, unto the dawning of the day :* Many may cry out in their long and tedious sicknets with Hezekiah, Isa. 38. 12. *I am cut off with pining sickness, from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me :* This is the sad case of many, they eat, and drink, and sleep, and walk abroad ; but they carry about them perhaps a Hectick, or Flux, or Consumption, whereby God is from day even to night making an end of them : Oh look about thee man, and consider, What hast thou to take too, when the hand of God hath made an end of thee ! when thou findest thy heart blessing thy self in thy wealth, friends, and other enjoyments, go alone a while, and tell thy soul, This is but a poor portion : when (as to my enjoyment of it) I am spitting it away, and sweating it away, and it goes away in the very filth and excrements of my body

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body every day. Beloved, it hath cost me some serious thoughts, to see an irresistible disease feeding upon a neer and dear friend : Friends provide the wholesomest Dyet, Physitians prescribe the fittest Medicines ; many Closets, and Families, and Congregations are full of fervent prayers for their health ; but still God bids the disease stay, and waste, and eat up the life of the friend : and as *Job* speaks, *He is in one minde, and who can turn him ?* *Job* 23. 13. and he taketh away, and who can hinder him ? *Job* 9. 12.

So much for the explication of the first particular : God commands diseases *to go, and they go.*

Secondly, He commands diseases *to come, and they come* : As the Centurion bids his souldier *come, and he comes* : so Christ can call away a disease from a sick person when he will : and this is clear, for God can at his pleasure suspend the exercise of his power, which was the cause of our sickness, and so the disease must needs cease : and all the creature-causes of diseases must cease to be, when God denies the work of his power, which caused their being : and they cannot work to disease and trouble us, if God will not work with them : and besides, he
can

Christs Power over

can at his pleasure exercise that power which causeth our health, and can work with Angels, Physitians, Medicines, Food, or any other things, which he shall please to use as the instruments and means of health to us: and therefore he tells his people, *Exod. 15. 26. I am the God that healeth thee.* And this is acknowledged by the Leper, and practised by Christ, *Mat. 8. 2, 3. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,* (saith the Leper). *Christ answers, I will, be thou clean.* Beloved, God hath deliverances from sickness, as well as from all other afflictions, at command, *Psal. 44. 4. Thou art my King, O Lord, command deliverances for Jacob:* So (saith David) when the Water-spouts of affliction came pouring upon him: *The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time:* This power of God appears by that of David, *Psal. 68. 20. To God the Lord belong the issues from death:* all the issues and means to escape death, belong to God: when a man falls into a dangerous sickness, he falls into the hands of death, he sticks as it were in the very jaws of death; as it is said of *Hezekiah, Isa. 38. 1. He was sick unto death.* Now in this case there is no visible issue, or escape out of the snares of death: the man himself

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strives, friends strive, Physicians strive, but there appears *no discharge in that war*, Eccl. 8. 8. But now God comes in the greatness of his Power, and he makes an issue from death; and *by these things men live*, Isa. 38. 16. For God saith to the Fever, to the Small Pocks, to the Consumption, &c. *Come away*; let the Minister live with his People; let the Father live with his Children; let the Children live with their Father; let the Wife live with her Husband: and thus he commands them away, and they are presently gone; as it is said of the waters, Psal. 104. 7. *At his rebuke they fled, and at his voice they hasted away.*

So much for the second particular.

Thirdly, Whatsoever Christ commands diseases to do, they do it; they are herein like the Centurions servant, when his Master bids *do this, and he doth it*: the meaning of this is, that Jesus Christ by all sicknesses fulfils his own will; and the reason is, because it is the power of Christ that works in all diseases: Now Christ works by his power according to his will, Eph. 1. 11. *He worketh all things according to the counsel of his will.* Beloved, where-ever a disease comes, it hath always some work to do.

1. Sometimes Christ commands it to fill a man

man with grievous pain and torment; for the Centurions servant here was grievously tormented: and we read, Job 33. 19. *He is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain.* This did so torture David, that he roared for the very disquietness of his heart, Psal. 38. 8. And Jobs pain was so great, that he saith, Job 16. 12. *God hath taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces.* And Sirs, although now we sit, and walk, and eat, and sleep at our ease, yet our bodies may be breeding those diseases, which may shortly cause torturing pain and anguish to come upon us, as Travel upon a Woman with child.

Sometimes God bids a disease to waste and wither a man in the prime and flower of his age, and he doth it: Many that are now inclosed in their own fat, Psal. 17. 10. *and cover their faces with fatness, and make collops of fat on their flanks,* Job 15. 27. yet when sickness comes, they are strangely altered; then *their flesh is consumed that it cannot be seen, and their bones that were not seen, stick out,* Job 33. 21. Then such a man may cry out with David, *I may tell all my bones.* Oh what a sad case is this man in! he looks on his silver and gold, and

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and they shine upon him ; and upon his precious jewels, and they sparkle and twinkle upon him ; and upon his pleasant pastures, and green meadows, and fruitful fields, and they smile upon him ; but he looks upon himself, and his own body, and there he sees a ghastly spectacle. Oh now if the face of a reconciled God in Christ do not shine, what a fearful condition doth the poor man lie in ?

Again, sometimes God commands a disease to take away a mans appetite and stomach to his meat, and it doth it, so that *his life abhors bread, and his soul dainty meat*, Job 33. 20. So Psalm 107. 18. and this is the sad case of many a man, who hath with *Dives fared sumptuously every day*, Luke 16. 19. But now poor wretch, he hath money enough to buy meat ; but all the world cannot purchase him a stomach.

Sometimes men are just finishing their design of hurting Gods people, and Christ commands a disease to stop them. Thus *Jeroboams* hand was stretched out against the Prophet, and God withered it presently, and the good Prophet was delivered. See 1 Kings 13.

But to conclude, sometimes God bids a disease tumble such a soul into hell, and it doth

Christs Power over

doth it; and the poor friends are *winding up the Christless body*, when the Devils are *worrying the damned soul*.

Sometimes he commands a sickness to loose a Saint out of the earth into heaven, and it doth it; and here lies the *ghastly jewel, the redeemed body*, but thither *flies the blessed and glorified soul*.

I now come to shew you divers of the main Ends of Christs exercising this government of diseases, in commanding them to *go and come, and do what he will*.

I shall mention these seventeen Ends.

First, To convince us of the great evil of sin, which is the meritorious cause of diseases. I conceive that the understanding of a man cannot comprehend the evil of sin; that is, he cannot know it *quantum est cognoscibile*, so far as it may be known, or *so far as nothing of the evil of it is unknown*: I think none can know it so but God; because a man cannot know all the holiness and goodness of God, which sin is against, nor all the wrath of God, which sin deserves: yet a man may by the power and light of Gods Spirit be so far convinced of the evil of sin, as to judge it the greatest evil in the world, and therefore to loath it, and abhor it most, and to desire more to be saved

saved from it, then from any evil: And this is one great use of all afflictions, thus to convince us of the evil of sin, Jer. 2. 19. *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee; know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.* And this God intends by visiting us with sicknesses, Job 33. 27. *He looketh upon men* (meaning in their sickness; for this was the case mentioned in the foregoing verses) *and if any say, I have sinned, and it profited me not, &c.* Beloved, God stands looking and hearkening at your sick beds, to see and hear, if upon deep conviction, and by sincere confession, any of you say, *I have sinned*: this God looks for in his Visitations upon us: We find this to be the effect of Davids sickness, Plal. 38. 3, 4. *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thy anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin: For mine iniquities are gone over my head as an heavy burden; they are too heavy for me.* Beloved, people would not be so fond of their sins, if they saw the diseases and dangers which they bring upon them, as a man would not be greedy of the daintiest meat, if he knew it were mixt with Rats-bane; nor be proud of the finest cloaths, if he knew they were

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infected with the Pestilence: So if people saw the Plague, Pocks, Dropsie, Fever, and the Consumption, in their pride, and oaths, and lyes, and drunkenness, and covetousness, it would make them afraid of sin, as well as of sickness: and therefore look not upon sin as it appears in your honours, profits and pleasures, as it appears at an Ale-house, May-pole, or Maurice-dance, or Cock-pit, or Bear-bait, or Stage-play; for there thou canst not see sin for its pleasures; but look upon thy self on a bed of languishing, and there see thy sins standing in order before thee; and then tell me what fruit thou hast in these things: Look upon thy self as hanging over the lake of brimstone, and then call thy drunken Companions about thee, and bid them pour out their flagons, and quaff off their cups, and see whether all these can make thee merry: when the flames of hell begin to catch and kindle in thy guilty soul, call in thy lyes, and injustice, to bring thee thy treasures of wickedness, and lay them under thy pillow, and see whether they can bring thee ease, when Death, and Hell, and the day of Judgment stand present before thee.

And (my Brethren) it is observeable, that when we sin in our sickness, we should see far

far more evil in it then as it is the meritorious cause of that disease : as we should look further into a sickness, then as it causeth present aches and pains in the body, we should see that Death and Eternity which comes after ; so we should see more evil and danger in sin, then as it brings such a disease ; for the evil of it is not spent in that : therefore we should look upon it as provoking God to punish us with diseases, and with death, and hell, which diseases are loosing us into.

The second End, to convince us of the *vanity* of the creature : now we are truly convinced of the *vanity* of the creature, when *we judge it to be empty of that good which must free a sinful man from misery, and fill him with true happiness* : It must needs be a vanity, when a man may be miserable with it, and happy without it. Now Christ appoints diseases as means to convince us of this vanity of the creature : for, as one saith wittily, the world is the Devils Chess-board, wherein a man can neither move forward nor backward, but the Devil attaches him with some creature or other : and indeed we are so full of the *spirit of the world*, as it's called, *1 Cor. 2. 12.* which doth so fill our hearts with the world, that God, and Christ,

and Heaven, and Salvation, are nothing to us; and therefore this sin is called, *a denying God that is above*, Job 31. 24, 25, 28. and *Agur* tells us, that when a man is full of the world, he is apt to *deny God, and to say, Who is the Lord?* Prov. 30. 9. Oh what poor scornful thoughts a covetous, proud, secure worldling hath of God, and Christ, and Saints, and Ordinances, and Salvation! Now this is one great use of sicknesses, to convince a man of the vanity of the world: and this is a most convincing argument; for I dare challenge all the worldlings which the world it self can own, to name me that earthly creature, and tell me what I shall call it, which can heal the wounds of a guilty conscience, or can take out the sting of death; or of which a man can truly say, Here is a treasure which a lump of phlegm cannot take from me: If thou canst not say this of the creature, I grant thou mayst use it for thy good; but be ruled by a friend, *never choose it for thy portion.*

But more particularly, we may hereby be convinced of the vanity of these five things.

First, Of the vanity of our selves: Sickness moved *David* to beg wisdom of God, to know *how frail he was*, Psal. 39. 4. and
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this made *Job* compare himself to a *leaf*, and to the *dry stubble*, and to a *flower* and *shadow*, *Job* 13. 25. and *Cap.* 14. 2. and we read, that this is the use of lickenels, *to hide pride from man*, *Job* 33. 17. that is, to take it quite away, to be seen no more : and if we did look on every thing which we are usually proud of, as it will prove on a sick bed, or death-bed, it would be an effectual means to abase us, and to hide pride from us. Beloved, it is a most precious thing for a man to be fill'd with the knowledge and sense of his own emptiness and vanity : The Kingdom of heaven is unchangeably entail'd upon all such, *Mat.* 5. 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.* Hereby a man is sweetly qualified for every duty : Faith never acts with more integrity and strength, then when it acts from the belief of a mans own emptiness. for when *self is most denied*, *Christ is most acknowledged and believed* ; then doth a man most heartily and strongly receive and rest upon Christ to justify and to save him, when he sees what a guilty, condemned, lost wretch he is in himself ; and when he sees what a weak helpless creature he is ; then doth he most trust to the infinite power of Jesus Christ : and this also doth exceeding-

ly endear his heart in love to God, when he sees that God is so good, and so full of grace, and love, and mercy, as to chuse, and call, and pardon, and save such a vile and loathsome creature as he; then repentance is most inward and spiritual, when a man with *Job*, *abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes*, *Job* 42. 6. and this fills the heart with prayer; for prayer begs of God what a man wants in himself: therefore when a man sees himself poor, and empty of all good, and knows that he cannot be supplied from himself, then doth he pray to be *fill'd with the fulness of God*. Now, I say, sickness is a special means to convince a man of his emptiness and vanity; for hereby a man is left bare and empty of all those creature-comforts which seemed to fill him before, and now he sees that nothing will fill him but grace and glory; and that there is nothing in him to make up this fulness.

Secondly, To convince us of the *vanity* of great men. Oh what is a Prince, or a Noble-man, or Gentleman, when the Pox, or the Fever, or the Consumption will insult over him, and scorn him, and make nothing of him; and there is nothing in him to resist or remove these, because the irresistible

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 ness, Help friends, help riches, help ho-
 nours: *But if God do not withdraw his an-
 ger, the proud helpers stoop under him, Job 9.*
 13. The places of the world are called slip-
 pery places, *Psal. 73. 18.* and they that know
 what God is, and what sin, and what the
 creature is, know by the causes the *slipperi-
 ness* of them, and see you sliding down as
 fast as you are rising up. And tell me, you *Palm 10.*
 great men of the earth, where is the place 18.
 which you can name and say, Here I can
 stand, and cannot *slip* into hell! I tell you,
 there are standers by can see your magnifi-
 cent buildings situated on the borders of
 hell, your beds made at the very mouth of
 hell, your tables spread over the pit of
 hell, your horses prancing with you, and
 Coaches ratling with you at the very edge
 and brink of hell: Ah great vanities!
 where-ever you are, the mouth of hell is
 gaping upon you, and there are thousands
 of diseases and deaths to loose you in: We
 may hence then conclude with *David, Psal.*
62. 9. That men of high degree are a lye and
vanity; and if we weigh nothing in the ba-
lance with them, they will prove lighter then
nothing, and vanity.

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Thirdly, The *vanity* of strong men: Solomon tells us, *Prov. 20. 29. The glory of young men is their strength*: and men are apt to be very proud of their strength, that they can leap, and lift, and run, and wrestle, and fight, and excel others in bodily exercises: But what is all this strength, when God comes upon thee by sickness, and *with his strong hand opposeth himself against thee?*

Job 30 21. Thy bones are now full of marrow and strength; but when a disease comes, thy strength will be dried up like a Potsheard, or pitcher baked and burnt in the fire, Psal. 22. 15. therefore when thy heart is lifted up in the sense of thy bodily strength, con-

Job 40. 9. sider, Hast thou an arm like God? or art thou stronger then he? canst thou fight with a Fever? or wrestle with the Falling-sickness? or out-run a Consumption? No, no: this conflict will prove like that of *Jobs* with the *Leviathan*, to teach thee to remember the

Job 40. 9. battel, and do no more. David was a man of such strength, that he tells us, that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms, Psal. 18. 34. but when he came to grapple with sickness, then he was so feeble and fore broken, that saith he, Psalm 22. 14. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joynt. Besides, if thou live to it, old age will creep upon

upon thee shortly : and then the *keepers of the house*, viz. the hands and arms, will tremble : and the *strong men*, viz. the limbs that support thee, will bow, as we read: *Eccles.* 12. 13. and at last *death shall devour thy strength*, *Job* 18. 13. and the very worms of the earth will be too strong for thee : Let not therefore the mighty man glory in his might, *Jer.* 9. 23. for as David infers from Gods waiting men with sickness, *Psal.* 39. 5. *Verily every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.*

4. To convince us of the *vanity* of children ; these indeed are sweet comforts, and it is a great mercy to be instruments in Gods way of bringing such an excellent creature as a man-childe or woman-childe into the world : and I have often thought, that when some do take too much pleasure in a horse, or in a dog, as a spaniel, or the like, that it's a great blessing to parents to have such objects of their delight, as their own children. Hence saith *Job*, *O that I were as in months past ; ——— when my children were about me !* *Job* 29. 2. -- 6. and truly though the fare be but course, yet it makes it more pleasant to have *these plants about the table* : These are indeed sweet flowers ; but a sick-
ness comes, and then, like a *Posie*, they wither

Psal. 128.
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with in thy bosome; so that we must conclude with *Solomon*, Eccles. 11. ult. that *childhood and youth is vanity.*

Laitly, of the *vanity* of wealth and riches: Oh how bare will sicknesses and death make a man! Sirs, a dead corpse is but a poor thing: How poor doth a rich man go out of the world; when sickness and death hath stript him of all his enjoyments! and then as *he came naked out of his mothers womb, so naked must he return: Job 1.21. Eccles. 5.15. 1 Tim. 6.7.* look on the world with your hearts filled with the thoughts of sickness and death, and then you will see the vanity of it; look on thy self as stretcht on a bed of languishing, see thy self lying in a Coffin, or in a Grave, or standing before the judgement-seat of Christ; and then see how all the riches of the world appear before thee: If a man look on his stately house and buildings, what a pleasant dream is he in to see a sweet scituation, wholesome air, convenient rooms, &c. but let him see death coming up into the windows; and then, what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst? So when a man is feeding himself with the pleasant thoughts of a feast, let him remember that *death is in the*

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Pot, and that death stands between the *cup* and the *lip*; and then he will not be so apt to make his belly his God, like those, *Phil. 3. 19.*

So when men are proud of their Pedigrees, and take pleasure in reckoning up their Kindred, and telling of their Families; let them take in these with the rest of their Relations, *saying to corruption, Thou art our father, and to the worms, Thou art our mothers and sisters, Job 17. 14.* and this will shew all to be but *noble dust*, and *rich earth*, and *great vanity.*

So much for the second End of Christs visiting men with sickness.

End 3. To fill our hearts with the sense of death: Sicknesses are fit means for this purpose, for sickness it self is a kinde of death: for death is a privation of life, a separation from that which is our life: And now we know we have, as it were, a life in food, friends and estates, &c. and sickness parts and separates us from these; it stops the passage betwixt these and a man, so that the pleasure and comfort of these cannot come to the man for his disease; but the man stands, as it were, between the *two worlds*, at the end of this world, and at the beginning of the other, and all creature-

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enjoyments are shut up from him; and the great things of eternity stand open before him: So that what the Apostle speaks of persecution, is for the same reason true of sickness, 2 Cor. 4. 12. *Death worketh in us*: when sickness comes, death works apace; it works away your health, it works away your ease, it works away your stomachs, it works away your strength, and at last works you into your graves. Hence we finde that the godly in Scripture were full of the thoughts of death in the time of their sickness. *David* prays on his sick bed that his visitation may be sanctified; to this purpose, *Psal. 39. 4. Lord make me to know my end* — and this improvement made *Heman* of his sickness, when the wounds of his soul caused wastings and diseases in his body, *Psal. 88. 3, 4, 5. For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws nigh unto the grave* — and this was good *Hezekiah* his frame in his sickness, *Isa. 38. 10, 11, 12. I said in the cutting off my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years: I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the earth. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me, as a shepherds tent:*

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I have cut off like a weaver my life. He will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. So when Job was almost throttled with a disease; for, saith he, Job 30.8. It bindeth me about as the collar of my coat: He makes this gracious use of his Visitation, vers. 23. I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. So that by all we see, that sickness is a special means to fill our hearts with the thoughts of death.

End 4. To fill the heart with the knowledge and sense of God. Beloved, our hearts are apt to be senseless of God as he appears in the ordinary course of his Providence and mercy; therefore God often manifests himself in the crosses and changes of our life, which makes us more apt to inquire into the cause of such alterations: as when corn grows in its ordinary course, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, few observe the good Providence of God herein; but when God by frost, hail or blasting, destroys the fruits of the field, so that it neither yeilds bread to the eater, nor seed to the sower, hereby his hand is more remarkably seen and observed: so whilst God continues men in health

health, and ease, and strength, few are sensible of his goodness herein : but when he fills their bodies with aches, pains and diseases, then his power and providence is more observed in such visitations. Hence saith Job, cap. 10. 17. *Thou renewest thy witnesses against me* : as Gods mercies are called his witnesses, *his doing good, and giving rain, and fruitful seasons*, Act. 14. 17. so sicknesses, and other judgements, are fitly called Gods *witnesses*, the use of which is to declare and testify of God to us : Oh, saith the Pestilence, He is a terrible God that sent me ; and saith the Fever, He is a mighty God that sent me ; and saith the Consumption, He is a just God that sent me : If you will not receive the testimony of Gods Ministers, and of his Mercies, will you receive the testimony of your afflictions ! certainly every sickness, if the conscience be awakened, will testify the same things of God and Christ, which Ministers preach to you. Consider further, I pray you, that there is a more special aptness in diseases to convince the heart of man, then in divers other things which yet will leave us inexcusable : as it is the use of outward mercies to commend the power, and wisdom, and care, and goodness of God to

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ours heart; and a man may improve every mercy so, as out of it to fill his heart with God; but there are snares and temptations in these to steal the heart from God, and therefore men are apt to lose God, and to forget him, when they are most full of these mercies: So in injuries from men, we should see the hand of God. *From men, which are thy hand, O Lord, saith David, Psal. 17. 14.* but we are usually so fill'd with anger and revenge towards men, that we forget the hand of God.

But now in a sickness, the name of God and the hand of God is more clearly known and seen, so that there is no such provision for lust in a sickness, as in the mercies: here is no profit, nor credit, nor pleasure for lust to feed upon; and here is no instrument to quarrel with: will a man be angry with a Fever, or be revenged on a Consumption? No, we must own the Power and Will of God, who is the cause of the visitation.

End 5. Christ sends diseases to turn men from sin and the world, unto himself. Hence God complains of the want of this, as a great disappointment, *Amos 4. 10. I have sent among you the Pestilence* ——— (to cause you turn to me) *yet have ye not returned un-*

to me, saith the Lord : and therefore it's observable, that in a sickness God doth blast that which makes the snare to hold our hearts from God : as we know, much of the life and strength of pride, and covetousness, and other lusts is in the profits, and pleasures, and preferments of the world ; now what are all these to a sick man ? his sickness doth, as it were, block up all provision from the flesh ; and now he may see that none but God and Jesus Christ can answer the necessity of his soul : and therefore let me ask you, What is the best thing which you would propound to a friend on a sick bed, who is just upon his flight into eternity ? will you provide him a sumptuous feast, or a rich suit of cloaths, or offer him some place of preferment ? No, no, shew him a God and Christ to save his poor soul ; shew him a happiness which will make him blessed, when he is turned out of all which sickness and death can take from him. Moreover, it appears that sickness is appointed by God as a means for our conversion, because this and every affliction calls us to do that which the word calls us unto : *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teacheest him out of thy law.* This makes a man a blessed man, when in his chastenings he

Psal. 94.
12.

he is full of the teaching of the Law. Hence we are commanded to *bear the rod, and who hath appointed it*, Micah 6.9. Beloved, the rod speaks as well as strikes; and we should hear the rod, as well as feel the rod: now what doth the rod speak? I answer, The rod speaks the minde and will of God, who smites with it: the rod and the word speak the same language; therefore we should see our sickness full of Scripture. Oh, saith the Dropsie, Turn to the God that sent me; and saith the Ague, Make your peace with God that sent me: And this is the voice of every disease which comes upon us: And therefore consider, that God doth often so bless and sanctifie a sickness to us, that it is a means to turn the heart to God, and causeth us to bring forth the fruit of many other dispensations: as for example, God sends to allure us by his mercies, *Hos. 11.4. I drew them with the cords of a man, with the bands of love*; there are secret cords and bands in all our mercies, to draw and to bind our hearts to God; and when we finde our selves nourisht with meat, and refresht with sleep, we should finde a secret vertue in these mercies to joyn our hearts to God; but God useth this means with many one, but the soul yet abides in his sins: then God

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sendeth another servant ; he sends a faithful Minister to call him to himself , and a faithful friend to perswade him to come ; but yet the poor sinner will not come: Well, saith God , I will yet try another messenger ; Go Fever, Go Ague, &c. Now these are often so blessed, that all the former dispensations work afresh : Now he remembers his mercies, and Sermons, and counsels, and they all work so effectually, that the poor sinner is savingly converted unto God.

End 6. To convince people of the necessity and excellencie of godly Ministers. Beloved, Gods Ministers are the strength of King and Kingdom, the very Militia of the Land : *The charrets of Israels, and the horsemen thereof*, 2 Kin. 2. 12. The Apostle shews how we should esteem godly Ministers , 1 Cor. 4. 1. *Let a man so account of us, as the Ministers of Christ :* If we esteem Ministers aright , we should prize them as Ministers , prize them for that which makes them differ, and wherein they are separated from other men ; as if you would truly prize the Lords day, and call it *a delight and honourable*, as the Scripture requires, you must esteem it as sanctified and separated from other days, and thereby you shall see it a more holy and blessed day : so if you would

would prize the Lords Supper, you must esteem the bread and wine as separated from other bread and wine, and as consecrated and sanctified to such a use: so if you would honour an Embassadour from a great King, you do not so much look upon his personal worth, but he is honoured and received as he is sent from the King, and stands in his stead. So, my Brethren, if we would prize a Minister aright, look upon him as separated to the Gospel, as cloathed with authority to preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments, as one through whose hands God hath in wisdom chosen to transmit the treasures of the Gospel to you, and as one who stands in the stead of Jesus Christ, who is ready to revenge all the affronts that are offered unto him. Now, my Brethren, there are no sorts of men so much abhorred by the world, as godly Ministers; these whom our Saviour calls the *salt of the earth*, Matth. 5. 13. as if the world of men would be but as a piece of stinking carrion, if it were not for godly Ministers and godly people. And the Apostle tells us, they are *unto God a sweet savour in Christ*, 2 Cor. 2. 15. yet they are hated, as if they were the loathsome excrements in the world. This *Paul* elegantly

expresseth, 1 Cor. 4. 13. *We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day.* Ministers are loathed, as if they were a *curse* and *plague* to the world, and as if they were the nastiest jakes or sink on the earth; for thus the words in the original, *meis diiquata* and *mei-Anna*, imply. But now when God throws a sinner on a bed of sickness, then a faithful Minister is for worth and excellency *one of a thousand*, Job 33. 23. for the more a man sees his need of those soul-saving mercies, which Christ sends by his Ministers, the more he will prize Ministers themselves: If a man sees what hell is, he will prize Ministers that labour to save him thence: If a man believes what heaven is, he will account Ministers precious, who are to be the greatest means under God to bring him thither: If the soul be wounded for sin, then how beautiful are the sect of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! *Rom. 10. 15.* So look on thy self as gasping under sickness at the door of Eternity; and then see whether thou dar'st boast, that thou hadst rather hear a *Piper* than hear a *Preacher*, or rather set up a *May-pole* than set up a *Minister*; these will prove but poor frolicks

frolicks, when thou seeft nothing but death and hell, and the day of judgement before thee; thou wilt be glad then to fend for thefe *Elders*, the *Minifters of the Church* to Jam. 5.14. pray over thee; and as faft as thou canft spit in their faces now, thou wouldft be glad then to lick the very duft of their feet, for the leaft found comfort that ever dropt from their faniified lips.

End 7. Chrift by fickneffes doth further and promote the Salvation of his own people, (as the following particulars do more fully evince) and the reason of this is, becaufe Jefus Chrift doth every thing to his people as their Saviour, and therefore there is a faving Power and Vertue works from Chrift in and through all his difpenfations towards them; as whether a father feed or whip his childe, he doth it with the heart of a father, for the good of his childe: fo if Chrift afflict his childe, he doth it with the heart of a Saviour, to fave his childe; and therefore all Gods people may fay of their ficknefs, as *Paul* in another cafe, *Phil.* 1.19. *I know that this fhall turn to my falvation.* We have full proof of this, *1 Cor.* 11.32. *When we are judged, we are chaftened of the Lord,* (meaning by thofe fickneffes and weakneffes mentioned in *verf.* 30.) *that we*
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should not be condemned with the world, nor go to hell with the world. Hence *Tertullian* speaking of Gods fatherly love in correcting his people, hath this pathetical passage, *O servum illum beatum, cujus emendationi Dominus instat, cui dignatur irasci! de patientiâ, cap. 11.* O blessed is that servant, for whose correction or amendment the Lord is so earnest, with whom he vouchsafes to be (so lovingly) angry. Beloved, it is observable, that God doth not distinguish his people from the wicked, by making them Lords and Ladies, or by filling them with the treasures of the earth: these are not the effects of distinguishing grace; for a wicked man may have his belly full of these things: *Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasures:* And therefore *Job* tells us of those that provoke God, that into their hands God brings abundantly of worldly things, *Job 12. 6.* he brings a whole Empire of the world into the hands of a Nero, or a Turk. But God distinguisheth his people from the world by making them *holy* and *happy*: and therefore though the common mercie of God, which brings riches, and honours, and health, &c. doth not so much abound to the godly, yet the distinguishing grace of God, which brings salvation, *Tit. 2. 11.* never fails; and

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and therefore when they have many things which hinder their estates, and liberty, and health; yet nothing shall hinder their salvation, but still the infinite power of Christ is working and prevailing to bring them to heaven.

End 8. Christ by sickness doth change his people more and more into his own likeness: So that as the fire melts and softens the gold, and thereby fits it for the stamp; so these sicknesses soften the hearts of the godly, and thereby fit them to receive the stamp of Gods Image. Hence many a Saint comes more full of God from a sick bed, then he did from a Sermon, or Sacrament, for many a day before. To this purpose agrees the saying of learned and holy Rolloc on his sick bed, *I am not ashamed (saith he) to profess, that I never attained to such a great measure of the knowledge of God, as I have gained by this sickness.* The Apostle assures us, that this is Gods end in all our corrections, *Heb. 12. 10.* *He chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* If we lose by corrections one way, as in our health, liberty, or estates; profit comes in another way, in holiness, in graces, and in comforts. There is a fit proof of this, *2 Cor. 4. 16.* *Though*

the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. In v. 12. (as was observed before) he tells us, that *death worketh in them*: Death was busily working to take away their lives: Well, saith he, but *though the outward man perish*, that is, though the body and bodily things perish and decay, yet *the inward man*, that is, the new man, the spiritual man, *is renewed day by day.* To apply this to our particular case, we often see, that whilst sickness is withering and wasting the body, the outward man, there comes a newness of life and spirit from Jesus Christ, to quicken and renew the inward man: So that although the outward man be feeble, speech weak, and hands weak, and limbs weak, yet look in the inward man, and you shall see every thing in its prime; faith strong, and love strong, and patience strong, and comfort strong: So that as the outward man is waiting and falling towards the earth, the inward man is rising and ripening towards heaven.

End 9. Christ visits his people with sickness, to try whether they will cleave to him notwithstanding he thus visit them. Beloved, you often hear and read of the tryals of Gods people; I shall therefore acquaint you what this tryal is, whereby you will

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more clearly understand this end of Gods Visitation. *A tryal is that whereby God puts his people to give a proof and experiment of their graces.* As for example, there was a question between God and Satan, concerning the integrity of *Job*: God testifies of *Job*, c. 1. 8. *That he was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.* Satan denies this, and undertakes to prove *Job* to be an Hypocrite, and a Dissembler, vers. 9, 10, 11. *Doth Job fear God for nought?* No marvel if he fear thee; thou payest him well for it; *thou hast made a hedge about him*, that no body must hurt him: but he makes but a Trade of Religion; do but throw down the hedge about him, and he will quickly throw down his service and obedience; *he will curse thee to thy face.* Now upon this, *Job* is put to the tryal: but though in a few hours he is changed from a man of great riches, &c. to a poor *Job*; yet still he holds fast his integrity, as God witnesseth of him, *Job* 2. 3. Afterwards ariseth another question, Whether *Job* will prove a hypocrite if God visit him with sickness; for, saith Satan, *Job* 2. 5. *Touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* Upon this, *Job* is put to another tryal, he is sorely and sadly diseased

sed from top to toe, *v. 7.* yet his heart proved sound still, *v. 10.* *In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* And if we observe him in the whole course of his tryal, though the infirmities of a man appeared in him, yet he would never be baffled out of his integrity; and at last he comes *out of the furnace like gold, Job 23. 13.* And thus God often visits his people, to try their graces. I shall leave this particular; only I shall direct you how to prove sound in all the tryals which can befall you; as thus: Make that a ground of your Religion, which no tryal can ever take away: if thou wilt be Religious, because it brings thee credit or profit, &c. then if a tryal comes, and God and Mammon clash, and thou must be either a Martyr or an Apostate, thy Religion is then gone and lost, because the ground and reason of it is gone: but if thou trust God, and love God, because he commands thee, and because he is a faithful and good God, here is a cause and ground and reason for thy Religion, which nothing can take away; and so thy holiness and godliness is everlasting, because it is built and grounded upon an everlasting foundation.

End 10. To try his people whether they will leave this world, and come to him in the

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the other world. Beloved, we should live in this world so, as to be always ready at an hours warning to leave all, and to go into Eternity. Now when God sends a sickness, we should look upon it as a Call into Eternity, and be ready to give a willing and obedient answer, *Job 14. 15. Thou shalt call, that is (saith Lavater) call me out of this life, and I will come, I will answer thee.* And thus in a Fever, or Consumption, &c. God stands as it were by the sick bed, and calls, Come away Husband from thy Wife, come away Wife from thy Husband, come away Father from thy Children: now we should be ready to leave all, and to come home to God; for this is one choice part of our obedience, to yield up our lives to God as his right and due, when he calls for them. Hence, saith *Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 6. I am now ready to be offered.* Every believer should look upon his life as a sacrifice sanctified and set apart for God; and to be always ready to be offered to him at his will and pleasure. It is observeable of *Moses, Deut. 32. 48, 49, 50.* God there appoints *Moses to go up to Mount Nebo, and die:* and did not *Moses* (think ye) go up with a heavy heart? No, he chearfully and obediently submits, and thither he goes up, and there he dies,

Deut.

Deut. 34. So if God say to thee by his Providence, Go into a Fever and die, or go into a Dropsie and die, go upon thy sick-bed and die, thou must yield, thou must go at the pleasure of God. And certainly if Believers did but clearly see whither sickness and death would bring them, it would be a thousand times harder duty to be content to live, then to be willing to die.

End II. To try his people, if they will resigne their friends to God when he calls for them by sickness: a friend is a choice treasure, he is *alter ego, another self*; but we must obediently give up our friends to the will of God: I shall tell you what this is, thus quietly to resign our friends to God; **It** is that whereby we solemnly worship God, acknowledging and praising his Name, and subjecting our hearts to his will, as he is a God of this dispensation. As for example, God smites a Husband with a disease; now saith God by this Providence to the Wife, What if I make thee a Widdow, and thy Children Fatherless? Why! Lord (saith the Wife) thou art herein a wife, holy, and good God; and I will still own, and trust, and love, and rejoyce in thee. Thus the heart must worship and praise God

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God, as it is signified by this dispensation.
Now if there appear any rising of discon-
tent, we must quiet all such tumults with
the Will of God, as *Eli* did, *1 Sam. 3. 18. It*
is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in
his sight. We have an excellent pattern of
this in *Job, Cap. 1. 20, 21.* when amongst o-
ther sad Providences, he heard of the sud-
den death of his sons, *he fell down and*
worshipt God (whom he saw in the Provi-
dence) saying, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord*
taketh away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.
Thus he worshippeth and praiseth God , as
it appeared, in taking away his Children.
And thus when any friends are diseased, la-
bour to get thy heart into this frame ; this
will make the mercy more sweet if they
live, and the affliction less bitter if they die.
I know your thoughts will now be full of
the goodness of your friends ; Oh such a
wife, faithful, loving Husband, such a care-
ful, meek, loving Wife ! &c. Well, look up-
on them at the very best, and as such offer
them up to God : offer to God the best of
thy flock, the best of thy friends ; the bet-
ter they are, the better is thy patience and
obedience in parting with them : and with-
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Pfal. 49. 7.

all remember, that if God will have thy friends to Eternity, there is *no ransom* to be taken for them, but they must be gone: Thou mayst cry after them, as *Elisha* did by *Elijah*. 2 Kings 2. 12. My Father, my Father; but *Elijah* never stops to answer him: So thou mayst cry, My Husband, my Husband; my Wife, my Wife; my Childe, my Childe! but to Eternity they will go, and never stay to answer thee; for God taketh away, and who can hinder him? or who can say unto him, What dost thou? We cannot hinder him, and we must not question him, but resigne all to him.

Job 9. 17.

keth away, and who can hinder him? or who can say unto him, What dost thou? We cannot hinder him, and we must not question him, but resigne all to him.

End 12. Christ visits his people with sickness, to fill their hearts with prayer: *Solomon* tells us, Prov. 15. 8. *The prayer of the upright is his delight.* For a Believer being in Christ, and found in his Righteousness at the Throne of Grace, there ariseth such a sweet smell and savour to God, which makes the Believer and his prayers pleasant and delightful to him: and therefore God often sends sickness to stir up a spirit of prayer in the hearts of his people. Hence we read of that sick man, Job 33. 26. *He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy.* So when *Hezekiah* was sick, he turned
his

his face to the wall (as he lay in bed) and wept, and prayed unto the Lord, Isa. 38. 2, 14. So David, as appears by Psal. 30, and 38, and 39. when his body was full of sickness, his heart was full of prayer. See further, Psal. 107. 17, 18, 19.

That was a savoury speech of a Reverend Divine in his sickness to his friends: *Sinite me Psittaci instar cum Domino meo balbutire: Suffer me to stammer like a Parrot with my Lord by prayer.*

The hearts of Gods people are called, as Mr. Brightman observes on Rev. 5. 8. *Vials full of Odours*; that is, hearts full of sweet and savoury prayers. Oh when the bodies of the godly are as a sink full of filthy humors, their hearts are as *Vials full* of the precious odours of prayer. This is the blessed privilege of a Believer, that in the most sad and deplorable condition in the world, he hath always access with boldness into the presence of God, Ephes. 2. 18. *Through Christ we have access by one Spirit unto the Father*, Hebr. 10. 19. *Having boldness to enter into the Holiest (viz. into heaven) by the Blood of Christ.* Thou mayst by faith and prayer step out of thy sick bed into heaven. Job saith in his affliction, Chap. 31. 37. *As a Prince would I go near unto him.* Sirs, the Spirit

Spirit of Prayer is a Royal Spirit, whereby a Believer goes with a Princely boldness and confidence unto God. Now indeed sickness is a most special season for prayer, because of our present need of those things which we are bound to pray for, not only in regard of our need of ease, and health, and life, though the want of these is a reason of prayer, *Isa. 38. 14. I am oppressed (with pain and trouble) undertake for me.* Hence David prays, *Psalms 39. 13. O spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence, and be seen no more.* But now our present need of soul-saving mercies should set awork our hearts in prayer: now a man is perhaps just in his fall into Eternity, and is like to finde within a few hours, whether Heaven or Hell be his portion: This man hath need to pray earnestly for sound repentance, and saving faith, and pardon of sin, and everlasting salvation.

End 13. To fill the hearts of the godly with sympathy to one another; as a distemper in a toe or finger, afflicts all the rest of the members; so when one member of Christ is visited, all the members about him are called to sympathize and condole with him, *1 Cor. 12. 26. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.* Hence we finde, that

that when a Christian is diseased, there is a spirit of prayer poured out in his behalf from all the Christians about him. When Melancthon was sick, it's reported, that Lutheri & Crucigeri precibus non tam convaleuit, quam revixit: By the prayers of Luther and Cruciger, he was not only restored from sickness to health, but as it were from death to life. Melch. Adam. in vita Melancthi. So when Myconius was sick, Luther affectionately prays, Peto ut loco tuo me faciat Dominus egrotum: I pray that the Lord would make me sick in thy stead. Melch. Adam. in vita Mycon. David had this charity for his enemies in their sickness, Psal. 35. 13. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into my own bosom.

I behaved my self as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourned for his Mother. Shall David thus fast and pray for his sick enemies, and shall not we for our sick friends? Job professeth what his carriage should have been for his friends, which proved such miserable Comforters to him, Job 16. 4, 5. If your souls were in my souls stead, I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the movings of my lips should assuage your grief.

grief. Oh Sirs, how sweet and savoury is it to a sick Christian, to receive spiritual Cordials from the wholesome tongue of a cordial friend! Now this will be a reason and ground of our sympathy, if we look on Believers in their sickness, in their union and relation to Jesus Christ, for saith Christ, Mat. 25. 36. I was sick (viz. in my sick members) and ye visited me. Consider, this diseased Christian is a member of that Body, whose Head sits at the right hand of the Majesty of the most High: And as poor as this sick Saint lies here, yet he is virtually raised up with Christ, and sits together with him in heavenly places: As miserable as he appears now, yet the next time we see him, we shall see him appearing with Christ in glory. Come with these considerations when you visit one another, and you will account it a mercy and great priviledge, if you, or any thing of yours be so blest, as to be the instrument of ease, or health, or comfort to such a precious one; and you will finde all well improved, when Christ shall say unto you, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you; for I was sick, and ye visited me.

Eph. 2. 6.

Col. 3. 4.

End 14. Christ visits his people with sickness, to glorifie his power and mercy
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in strengthening and comforting them in their sickness : That of the Apostle is true of bodily, as well as of spiritual weakness, *2 Cor. 12. 9. My strength is made perfect in weakness.* Now is a time for God to shew his strength in the weakness of his people, *Psal. 41. 3. The Lord will strengthen him on a bed of languishing ; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* Methinks that man should lie easily, who hath the God that made all the world, to make all his bed in his sickness : The meaning is, God will be the cause of rest, and ease, and peace to him in this condition. Hence Myconius in a fit of sickness writes to Luther, *Se non lethaliter, sed vitaliter egrotare ; that he is not sick unto death, but sick unto life,* having so much spiritual life and comfort in his sickness : And one of Mr. Dods Converts told him in her sickness, *That she was full of comfort, and could as hardly forbear singing now, as she could crying when she was in Child-bearing.* That of the Psalmist agrees to this, *Psalms 73. 26. My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

It's observable, that God hath this title in Scripture, *The God of all comfort,* *2 Cor. 1. 3.* because whatever comfort we have

from any creature, it comes from God through the creature: it's the goodness of God in the creature, which makes it a comfort; it's the goodness of God which makes a Wife a comfort, a Childe a comfort, &c. And then he is the God of all comfort, because he comforts us against all troubles: there is comfort from God through the creatures, but this is but some comfort: Money comforts a man against his debts, and meat comforts him against his hunger; but there are other cases, as of sickness, and spiritual wounds, and temptations, &c, wherein these yield no comfort: But whatever the trouble be to a Believer, there is comfort in God against it: we have often God the Holy Ghost called in Scripture, *The Comforter*: now it's a special skill to observe, which way God in a most especial manner glorifies his several Titles: This Title, *The Comforter*, is glorified by Gods exercising his infinite power to comfort the hearts of his distressed people: Now sickness is an affliction, wherein a man can have nothing to comfort him but God and Jesus Christ; this is clear: for true comfort is the strengthening of the heart against the present trouble: now that which comforts us, must be as truly ours, as the trouble is

is ours; we must say, Our God, and our joy, as well as Our sickness, or else we cannot have comfort. And again, it must be as near as our trouble; for it's no comfort to an hungry man to know he hath meat, if he cannot come at it. Now faith sees God and Christ as near to the soul to comfort it, as sickness is to the body to trouble it. And then lastly, that which comforts us, must be good enough to take away the evil that troubles us: now a mans great trouble on his sick-bed, is, for fear of losing his poor soul: and in this case, to shew him riches, and honours, and pleasures, will not comfort him, for they can do nothing in the removing his trouble; but if God say, *I am thy salvation*, now the man is comforted, and sings at the very door of death. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 14. 32. The righteous hath hope in his death.* Now his hope is not for some place of preferment, or some rich purchase, or the like; for death brings no such things; but he hopes for preferment in the great City that hath foundations, *Heb. 11. 10. where he is for ever to dwell in his house not made with hands*, *2 Cor. 5. 1.* and these sickness and death bring him into. That Scripture is sweet, *Heb. 6. 19, 20. Which hope we have, as an anchor of the soul, both sure*

and stedfast, and which entred into that within the vail, whither our forerunner is for us entred, even Jesus. — The place within the vail is heaven, where the anchor of hope enters and sticks: So that though a poor believer lie gasping and groaning on his sick bed, or in other afflictions; yet this is his comfort, he is still anchor'd and fastned to heaven.

End 15. Christ visits his people with sickness, to fit them for greater sufferings: As the Martyr Bilney put his finger in the fire, so fit him to burn in the flames. Christ by sickness makes a man fit to die, and then he is fit for any sufferings; for he that can obediently sacrifice his life to God, can for the same reason offer up his health, liberty, and estate to God: and this made Paul ready to suffer all persecutions, because he was ready to die, *Acts 20. 22, 23, 24.* He knew that every where bonds and afflictions did waylie him; but, saith he, *v. 24. None of these things move me: I will not stir a step out of my way of obedience, for all the bonds and afflictions that the hands of devils and men can make: What is his reason? because I count not my life dear unto my self, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to*
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testifie the Gospel of the grace of God. Precious Paul, so that he could die in joy, and die in duty, he did not think his life too dear or too good to be spent for Jesus Christ. So, saith he, 1 Cor. 15. 32. I protest by your rejoycing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. He was so acquainted with death, that he made it his daily practice to put himself into a frame and posture to die: and so many a Christian hath got such acquaintance with death by sickness, that he lives in a continual frame and readiness to die: besides, his sickness makes him less fearful of men: for he knows, when they Luke 12.
have killed the body, they have no more that 4.
they can do; they have done their worst, which is no more then an ordinary disease can do: and therefore, as the Philosopher told the Tyrant, when he threatned to kill him, that a Fly could do that: so Believers need not fear what men can do, because they can do no more then a Fever, Drop sic, Consumption, or any other disease can do: and thus he is prepared by sickness for other afflictions.

End 16. To prepare them for great mercy. Beloved, sometimes mercies are more dangerous for Gods people then afflictions; they are often worse in plenty

then in poverty, in credit then in disgrace; more secure in health and ease, then in pains and sickness. This happens, when our mercies are too big for our graces; as when we have great credit, and little humility: or else when our outward mercies do most feed our inward corruptions; as when riches do meet with a heart much inclined to covetousness, and health and ease are given to a Christian who is apt to be idle and secure: now therefore God melts his people in the Furnace of Affliction, to prepare them to be *vessels of mercy*. Hence we read, *Hebr. 12. 11. That no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby*: As whilst a Childe is under the discipline of the Rod, he receives the fruit of his dulness and idleness in the smarting of the Rod; but afterwards, he receives the fruit of his learning and education in honours and preferments: So whilst Gods children are corrected with sickness, and other afflictions, they receive the bitter fruit of their sins, of their pride, frowardness, security, and creature-confidence, &c. and this is not for the present *joyous, but grievous*; but afterwards they reap the fruit

fruit of righteousness and holiness, of faith, fear, love, prayer, &c. and this is sweet and peaceable fruit : we have a pertinent proof of this, *Psal. 126. 5, 6. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. As the Husbandman in a year of famine, when corn is dear, and seed scarce, he sows, he ventures it in the ground, but he sows in tears, he goes out with his seed weeping : Ah, thinks he, this corn would have made so much bread for my poor wife and children, or would have given so much money towards paying my rent : Thus with a sad heart he sows his seed ; but when harvest comes, and brings forth a plentiful crop, then he reaps in joy, and brings home his sheaves with singing, shouting and rejoicing. Thus it is with Gods child in affliction, as suppose in sickness, his grief is great, and his pains grievous ; yet he sows, though it be in sorrow ; he believes in tears, and hopes in tears, and prays in tears : well, after comes the harvest of health, and he reaps the fruit of faith, hope and prayer, and he goes about rejoicing and praising God, and carrying his sheaves of mercy and

and comfort about with him. Our Saviour speaks fully to this case, Joh. 16. 20, 21. — *Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.*

A woman when she is in travel hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the childe, she remembreth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. As a woman with childe, when the hour of her travel is come, is full of sorrow with the throws and pains of her travel; but when she is delivered, she forgets her sorrow, and with a joyful heart falls a kissing and imbracing her childe: So, my Brethren, when the hour of sickness, or other affliction comes upon us, we are full of sorrow with the pains and travels of our affliction; but when we are delivered, and see what mercy our affliction hath brought forth, the joy and comfort of our graces, and experiences, and deliverances, doth swallow up the sorrow of our affliction.

We have a special instance of the glorious chain of Gods wonderful Providence towards *Joseph*, to confirm the truth in hand: his afflictions lasted about thirteen years: (for he was seventeen years old when he visited his Brethren, Gen. 37. 2. and thirty years old, when he was preferred in *Pha-*

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Isaiah's Court, *Gen.* 41. 46.) Now in all this time his afflictions were sad; he was parted from his tender father, he was bought and sold; after this unjustly defamed and imprisoned; he was put like a Rogue in irons, *Psal.* 105. 18. his afflictions were so great, that the afflictions of Gods people were long after; and ever will be to the end of the world, called the *afflictions of Joseph*, *Amos* 6. 6. yet he was after all this raised up in great mercie, and was made a blessed instrument to save the Church and *Israel* of God from perishing with famine. We have another instance in *Job*. I shall say no more of him, but onely apply to his afflictions, what the Apostle saith of his patience, *Ye have heard of the afflictions of Job*, and *Jam.* 5. 11. *have seen the end of the Lord*; for as we read, *Job* 42. 12. *The Lord blessed the latter end of Job*.

David upon this ground encouraged himself in his afflictions, because he believed a good issue out of them, *Psal.* 71. 20, 21. *Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

Consider further, that sickness when sanctified

sanctified, exceedingly fits a man both for Spiritual and Temporal mercies; for then a man comes out of sickness, as one who is raised from the grave, and so he is filled with the thoughts of death and eternity; and this is a frame of heart, which gives a kindly relish to all spiritual mercies; this makes him taste God and Christ to be exceeding gracious, in the likeness and enjoyment of whom he sees himself blessed and satisfied through all eternity: And this also fits him for Temporal mercies; for it teacheth him to use friends, lands, food, and all his temporal enjoyments for eternity; he hereby learns to turn his treasures in earth into treasures in heaven: This makes him at the will of God to leave father and mother, and lands, and life, knowing that he shall receive the comfort of all in another world; so he cheerfully gives to Christ in his

Phil. 4.17. members, knowing that this *fruit will abound to his account* when Christ and he come to reckon: and that this is *laid up in store as a good foundation against the time to come*, 1 Tim. 6.19. As a man that intends to transplant himself beyond the Seas, turns his stock here into such things which will make his life comfortable when he comes there: So a Saint knowing that he is upon

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a journey beyond this world, turns his stock and estate to Gods glory here, believing that it will be returned to him a thousand fold in the glory and joys of heaven, when he comes there.

End 17. Which is the last that I shall mention, is to gain to himself praise and glory in recovering his people from their sickness. Hence we read, *Job 11.3,4.* when it was told Christ, that *Lazarus, whom he loved, is sick:* Christ answers; *This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.* Beloved, recovery from sickness is a great mercy both to a mans self and others, as *St. Paul* acknowledgeth of *Epaphroditus*, *Phil. 2.27.* *He was sick, nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him, and not on him onely, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.* And therefore upon this reason the hearts of Gods people have been filled with the praises of God: *Psal. 103.1,2,3.* *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name:* And this is one ground of this — *Who healeth all thy diseases.* This was *Hezekiah* his practice in this case; *Isa. 38. 19.* *The living, the living, they shall praise thee, as I do this day.* — See also, *2 Cor. 1.9,10, 11.* *We had*

had the sentence of death in our selves ; that is, our danger was so great, (whether by sickness, or persecution, or rather both, I shall not inquire) that we looked on our selves as sentenced to dye ; and this sentence was in us, and did fill us : but, saith he, God who raiseth the dead, delivered us from so great a death, for this end, that thanks may be given by many on our behalf. Beloved, sometimes our sicknesses are very grievous and dangerous, as Job cries out, cap. 23. 2. My stroke is heavier then my groaning ; and saith, Job 10. 16. Thou shewest thy self marvellous upon me ; that is, thou exercisest thy marvellous power and greatness in afflicting me. Now this should cause us to make the praises of God more glorious for our recovery ; and therefore in such cases the godly have acknowledged this mercy to be a kinde of resurrection from the dead : as Psal. 30. 3. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, 1 Sam. 2. 6. Who bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. Job 33. 28, 29, 30. He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and his life shall see the light. And this is the Providence that all are to observe and acknowledge : Loe ! all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit,

to be inlightened with the light of the living.

Uses.

First, Use of Information, to inform us of five things.

First Information is, that Jesus Christ is a terrible God: this appears, in that he hath all diseases at command, to bid them go, and come, and do what he will. The Scripture makes known God to be a terrible God, Deut. 7. 21. *He is a mighty God, and terrible*, Nehem. 9. 32. *The great, the mighty, and terrible God*, Job 37. 22. *With God is terrible Majesty*, Psal. 47. 2. *For the Lord most high is terrible*: And we finde this inference made from Gods visiting men with sickness, Deut. 28. 58. *That thou mayst fear this glorious and fearful Name, The Lord thy God*. Beloved, it is one of the most devouring delusions of the Devil, to perswade men, that God is so merciful, that he will never question them for their sins. Hence we read that the wicked man, who contemns God and his judgements, saith in his heart, *God will not require it*, Psal. 10. 13.

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They think in their hearts and conscience, that God will never trouble them for their sins : this secure temper of the ungodly is seen by that of the prophet, Ezek. 7. 7. *The morning is come upon thee — — the time is come, the day of trouble is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains ; or as Junius and Termellius read it, not the Echo of the mountains :* implying, that they feared no more the threatnings of the Prophets, then a vain airy noise or *Eccho* in the mountains : this makes secure sinners to bear no fear of God, Psal. 36. 1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* Their sins are so notorious and visible, that they declare in the very hearts and consciences of the godly, that there is no fear of God before their eyes. Now to awaken you out of this damnable security, I shall propound four Considerations to convince you that God is a very terrible God.

1. Consider, that when the terrors of all bodily evils are past, yet then God falls upon men with everlasting terrors : we usually account great men very terrible ; but God tells the wicked, Isa. 47. 3. *I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man ; thou hast been afraid oftentimes of meet-*
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ing with thy Creditor, or of meeting with the Magistrate, &c. but consider when thou comest to meet God in his taking vengeance for sin, he will not meet thee as a man, as a hard Creditor, or as a harsh Landlord, or a furious Souldier, or a severe Magistrate, but he will meet thee as a God of wrath and vengeance : Upon this ground our Saviour presents God terrible, *Luk. 12. 4. 5. And I say unto you, My friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you should fear ; fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* Observe, that what our Saviour saith of men, is true of all bodily evils, when they have killed the body, they have no more that they can do ; then the fear of them is past ; there is no fear of Pestilence, or Fever, or Consumptions in eternity : but now a wicked man can never say *the worst is past*, because he can never be past hell : for God after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; so that when you think it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a merciless Usurer, or a cruel Landlord, or a bloody man ; or to fall into the fire, or water ; or to fall into the Pestilence, Fever, Dropsie, &c. then consider that, *It is a fearful thing*

Heb. 10. 31 *thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Secondly, consider, God is not onely a God of mercy, but also a God of judgment: the Devil devours most men by perswading them, either that God hath no wrath, which makes them presumptuous; or that he hath no mercy, which makes them desperate. Now to arm you against the former temptation, which concerns the business in hand, fill your hearts with the belief of God, as he is a God of judgement, for *the Lord is known by the judgement which he executeth*, Psal. 9. 16. therefore he tells us: *I kill, and I make alive*, Deut. 32. 39. So saith he, *Isa. 45. 7. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things*: All the evil of punishment which comes into the world, comes from God; all the hurt that is done by fire, water, wind, thunder, earthquakes, God doth it; all the hurt that comes by famine, pestilence, sword, blasting, mildew, God doth it; all that dye, God kills them; all that go to hell, God damns them: and is not this a terrible God?

Thirdly, look not on God as men judge of him, when they are secure, and God is patient; but as he appears, when men awake with guilt, and God awakes in
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wrath. Beloved, if every Sin should presently bring a Judgement, if every Oath should kill a Cow, and every Lye break a Bone, and every act of Drunkenness turn a man into a Dropsie; then sin would be accounted more dangerous, and God more terrible: But as we read, *Psal. 55. 19. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.* When men can swear, lye, be drunk, scoff at godliness, prophane Sabbaths, and yet eat, drink, sleep, work, and play all alike; this makes them confident, that God is not so angry with them, as a company of precise Puritans would have them believe. We read of this Atheistical temper, *Psal. 50. 21, 22. These things hast thou done* (meaning the crying sins fore-mentioned) *and I kept silence* (saith God) *I did not disturb thee, nor hinder thee; and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self, that I liked sin as well as thou didst; but thou wilt be of another minde, when I come to reprove thee, and to set thy sins in order before thee, and to tear thee in pieces, when there shall be none to deliver thee.* We read, *Psal. 40. 11. Evil shall hunt the violent man to destroy him; and it is said, Numb. 32. 23. Your sin shall finde you out.* Sinners lye close and

hide themselves in their sins, as if judgement could never finde them: Oh, but consider, sicknesses, and death, and hell are looking for thee, they are hunting after thee. Hark, methinks I hear the cry of the hunters, and the sound of the feet of death pursuing thy soul: I may say unto thee as she said to *Sampson*, *The Philistines are upon thee Sampson*: Sickness is upon thee sinner; death and judgement is coming upon thee; the wrath of the eternal God is *roaring* against thee: these things should make thee cry out with *David*, Psal. 119.20. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgements.*

Lastly, Consider God as a God of all sicknesses and diseases, to convince thee that he is a terrible God; these with other judgements are called *the terrors of God*, Job 6.4. *The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me*; and it's clear that God for this reason is terrible; for that is terrible which is destructive to the health, and life, and being of man; this makes fire, water, wind, thunder, men and devils terrible; and this makes Sickness, the Pestilence, Fever, the Pocks, the Stone, the Consumption, and Death, and Judgement terrible. Now therefore what a terrible Majestie is God, who
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makes all these so terrible ? for as there is no fear of an Ox-goad, or of the Jaw-bone of an Ass ; but the one in the hand of a mighty *Shamgar*, was a terrible instrument of death to six hundred men, *Judges 3.31.* and the other in the hand of a strong *Sampson* killed heaps upon heaps, heaps upon heaps, a thousand men, *Judges 15. 16.* So this makes all diseases, and all instruments of death terrible, because they are in the hand of a mighty God, who for this reason is to be acknowledged and feared as a very terrible God.

Secondly, informs us of the infinite patience of God towards ungodly men ; which appears, in that God hath all diseases, and death at command to avenge himself upon them, and yet that he is pleased so long to forbear. The Scripture makes known the glory of God to us by this Attribute, *Exod. 34.6. The Lord merciful and gracious, long-suffering.* So *Psal. 86. 14. Rom. 2.4.* This patience of God is his infinite goodness, whereby he doth moderate and withhold his wrath from falling upon sinners. Pardoning grace takes away the wrath of God, and looseth the believer from being bound to suffer it : But here the sinner lyeth condemned, and stands bound over by the Law,

to suffer Gods wrath ; but God by his infinite patience forbears to inflict it.

Now I shall briefly propound these three Considerations, to convince us of the patience of God.

1. Consider the greatness of that wrath which God withholds from falling on you, viz. all the punishments which are threatned in the curses of Gods Law : God doth not only keep off millions of diseases , but also mountains of torments from coming upon thee every day: the great difference which is betwixt thee and a damned soul in hell , is made by the patience of God. Oh poor Christless sinner, when I stand seriously looking on thee eating, and drinking, and laughing, and sporting in thy sins, as if thou thoughtest thy self as safe as ever an Angel of heaven ; and then believe what the Scripture speaks against thee, and see what is in God against thee ; I cannot but tremble to look thee in the face, to see whither thou art so merrily going, and what an alteration sickness and death is shortly like to make with thee, but for present God in infinite patience withholds all the wrath that thou deserveest.

2. Consider the great provocations that God doth bear : Sin is said to provoke or call forth the wrath of God ; and notwithstanding

standing such horrid sins call and cry for his wrath, yet in the infinite power of his patience he forbears. The Scripture ascribes a Voice to three things which cry aloud for Gods wrath.

1. Sin cries, *Gen. 18. 20, 21. The cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is great.* — Swearing cries, Pour out thy wrath on the Blaphemer, that belcheth out me: Drunkenness cries, Oh thou consuming fire, devour this Beast that commits me. So there is a cry against a Nation, and against a City or Family: Oh Profaneness cries, Come away Pestilence, come away Famine, and devour *England*, that is so filled with me: but yet God in infinite patience withholds his Judgments.

2. The Estates of men which are gained by sin and wickedness cry for vengeance, *James 5. 4. Hab. 2. 11. The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.* The Prophet speaks, as if all the parts of a house built by fraud and blood, did consent to cry one after another for vengeance against the founders of it: the *Stone* cries, Lord revenge the cruelty and injustice that laid me; and the *Timber* answers and cries, Make inquisition for the blood that laid me. Oh you that eat the bread of deceit, and live upon

lies and injustice, were your consciences awakened, you might hear the very bread on your tables, and the money in your purses, and the stones and timber of your houses cry for the vengeance of God against you; and yet this infinitely patient God bears with you.

Lastly, the sighs and groans of Gods people cry aloud for vengeance against their Persecutors and Oppressors. *Exod. 3. 7. I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Ægypt, and have heard their cry: Psa. 12. 4. For the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, will I arise.* Beloved, the godly are hated for their likenesses to God: this makes the difference betwixt them and the wicked; for herein they differ from the world; and a man must either make God his enemy, and the Devil his father, and be content to damn his own soul, or else the world and he will never be friends, but *he that is born after the flesh will persecute him that is born after the spirit.* Now herein is glorified the patience of God, when they that wrong his people, rake in the apple of his eye; and yet this tender Father stands by, and sees his children scorned, and loathed, and murdered, for choosing, and honouring, and fearing, and pleasing him, and for a long time bears all.

Lastly,

Lastly, the infinite patience of God appears, in that he can always ease himself of his enemies, and yet he forbears. God complains, that the sins of men are *a trouble to him*, Isa. 1. 14. and that they *weary him*, Isa. 43. 24. and, saith he, *Amos 2. 13. Behold, I am pressed under you, as a Cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.* Now the Scripture speaks, as if God did ease and comfort himself in the destruction of his enemies, Isa. 1. 24. *Ab, I will ease me of my adversaries* — Ezek. 5. 13. *I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted.* Now God can suddenly thus ease and comfort himself: let him but command the Pestilence, the Fever, the Pocks, &c. they will quickly fetch them to hell, never to trouble him more; but in his infinite patience, and long-suffering, he spares them, and bears with them.

Thirdly, Informas us of the reason why godly Ministers are so serious in shewing men their danger, and pressing them to repentance, because they see Almighty God armed with such a multitude of diseases, and judgments, and deaths against men: when a Minister is filled with love to, and longing for the salvation of his people, and sees the diseases, and other judgments, which

which lye at the door of every sinner ; and knows, that the want of his care and faithfulness may be the damnation of a soul, or more, before another opportunity; this must needs make Ministers labour earnestly for the salvation of their people : and therefore it is an excellent thing for a Minister to preach, and pray, and administer Sacraments, and live, as if he saw God, and Christ, and Angels, and Devils, and Death, and Judgment looking him in the face ; to preach as if he were to die preaching, and people were to die under his Sermons. Hence, saith the Apostle, *2 Cor. 5. 10. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ : whence he infers, vers. 11. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we perswade men.* Beloved, we know what Christ will do to us, if we preach the word deceitfully, and damn the souls whom we are sent to save. We know the doom of those who *know not God, and obey not the Gospel, 2 Thes. 1. 8, 9.* We know whither drunkards, and whoremongers, and blasphemers, and worldlings, and all unregenerate persons are going; and therefore *knowing the terrors of the Lord, we perswade men:* we are sent in the stead of Christ to perswade you to heaven, and therefore dare not

not stand in the stead of Devils to flatter you into hell. Sirs, it is not many weeks since I was even past preaching, and I know that death and I must shortly meet again, and I know ere long you will be past hearing; and therefore I would preach and live so, that when sickness and death return, I may be found labouring *to save myself, and them that bear me.* In the mean time, when I look upon God, and see millions of deaths in his hands, and every death *hell following it;* I dare not but warn you *to flee from the wrath to come,* Mat. 3. 7. Beloved, a faithful Minister would never tell you of your sins, but to cause you to forsake them; and the word *Hell* should not be so often in his Pulpit, but that he is afraid lest his people should come there: he hath no secret grudge against you, neither *desires the woful day, God knows,* Jer. 17. 16. but he dares not deceive you, he dares not be damned for you, in preaching you and himself into hell.

The fourth informs us, whence it is that we hear so much of the unexpected deaths of men; why here is the cause, God commands a disease, or some other messenger of death, to go and to fetch them away, and they are gone: if any die, God tells all

all the world who kills them; *I kill*, saith he, *Deut. 32. 39.* Hence we see great men for a while fill a Country; and a frown of their faces, and a stamp of their foot, makes all to quake about them: but they prove like *Pharaoh*, of whom we read, *Jer. 46. 17. Pharaoh King of Egypt is but a noise.* So they make a great noise in the Country a while, and then like a sound in the Air pass away. Methinks a great man is like a great winde, it blows violently, and rageth a while, as if it would throw down all afore it; but it proves but a wind which is soon spent and laid. So a furious wicked man, he blusters and ruffles a while, as if he would blow down God and man; but a disease, and death comes, and *he gives up the ghost, and where is he?* *David* made this observation, *Psal. 37. 35, 36. I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green Bay-tree.* Observe, he spreads himself, he enlargeth his power, and riches, and greatness: But see what follows, *Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found:* for a sickness comes, and *like a tempest takes him away in a night*, *Job 27. 20.* and so by the blast of God they perish, *Job 4. 9.* So we see others which would be as great sinners, but

but that they are not so great men; for *instrumenta explicanda nequitie desunt*, as Seneca speaks, *they want instruments to do mischief*: these *curst Kine have short horns*, and so cannot do so much hurt: these men are full of lyes, oaths, drunkenness, and are set on fire against God and godliness, sinning with that impudence, as if they would out-face and brow-beat God and man, and make death and hell afraid of them; but a sickness and death comes, and they are *driven away in their wickedness*, Prov. 14. 32. whose end Job describes, cap. 24. 29. *Drought and heat consume the snow-waters, so doth the grave those that have sinned.*

So also we see godly people, who are the blessing of their Age, of whom *the world is not worthy*, Hebr. 11. 38. the world deserves not the prayers, and counsels, and examples of such men; yet these *perish*, though few lay it to heart, Isa. 57. 1. (for in this case *there is one event to all*, Eccles. 9. 2. for as they lie at the graves mouth, we cannot see the difference betwixt a *skull that sleeps in Jesus, and a skull that is condemned to hell*) and therefore it's true of these gracious ones, as was said of the good Patriarch, Gen. 47. 29. *Israel must die*; or as
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we read of David, Acts 13. 36. *After he had served his own generation, by the will of God, he fell asleep.* All these things are from Jesus Christ, who sends sicknesses and death at his pleasure; and many such things are with him.

Lastly, It informs us of the great mercy of God, that we enjoy our health and lives so long, when he hath so many diseases in his hands to deprive us of both: Hence he is called, the *Preserver of men*, Job 7. 20. *It is the Lord who is our life, and the length of our daies; who preserves us, and keeps us alive.*

Deut. 30.
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Psal. 41.2.

Consider the many deaths and dangers we are preserved from, that thereby we may see and acknowledge the greatness of this mercy. Our Bodies and Souls were no sooner united in the Womb, but thousands of deaths were ready to part us again: we were liable to all the dangers that our Mothers were in, in whose lives our lives were bound up; besides, multitudes of evils might have kill'd us there, and a miscarrying Womb might have loosed us into Eternity. And if we look through the whole course of our Age, what year, or week, or day can we name, wherein some have not died? Oh infinite mercy,

mercy, that keeps us alive in a world of devouring devils and bloody men! what multitudes of diseases might have bred in our own bodies! what sudden deaths by Falls, Fire, Water, Thunderbolts, &c. There is never a beam in our houses, or beast in our fields, or bit of meat on our tables, or stones in the streets, but methinks it's like a Pistol charg'd and cockt (if God say the word) to strike us dead in the place: where ever we sit, ride, walk, lie down, there is from thence a *fall into Eternity*. We may well wonder, when we read of the three Childrens preservation in the Fiery Furnace, *Dan. 3.* and of *Daniels* safety in the Lyons Den, *Dan. 6.* and yet I tell you, our daily and hourly deliverances are as great, only they are not so rare: for to name no more, Devils can as easily kill us, as the Fire or Lyons could them; and we have no more power to resist or escape these Murderers, then they had the merciless Flames, or greedy Lyons; but as God miraculously preserved them, so doth he wonderfully preserve us, even in a croud of deaths and dangers.

Use 2.

Use 2. Of Reprehension.

Secondly, This Doctrine reproves those who in time of sickness do either for themselves, or friends, seek to Witches or Wizards for cure; Christ makes them sick, and they will go to the Devil to make them well: but if Christ command all diseases to go and come at his will, it must needs be a damnable sin to forsake Christ, and the Ordinances appointed by him for our health, and to seek help from the Devil. This was King *Saul's* sin, though in another case, who consulted the Witch of *Endor*, when he was invaded by the Philistines, 1 *Sam.* 28. 7. Then did *Abaziah* in his sickness send to enquire of *Baalzebub* the god of *Eckron*, 2 *Kings* 1. 2. And this is the horrid wickedness of many ignorant Atheistical wretches, who when they have lost their goods, or are visited with sickness, seek to Conjurers and Wizards, such as they call wise men, or wise women, to help and relieve them: This sin is often condemned in Scripture, *Lev.* 19. 31. *Regard not them that have familiar spirits. Observe, do not regard them, but look up-*

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on them as the basest people in the Country, neither seek after Wizards. See *Isa. 8. 19. Lev. 26. 6.*

Observe the evil and danger of this sin, in these four particulars.

First, This is a sin which brings a man under the heavy wrath and curse of God, *Lev. 20. 6. The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.* Observe, for this sin God will set his face against thee, all his power and wrath is set and bent against thee: O how canst thou hold up thy face, when *the face of God is set against thee!* and whereas thou thinkest thou art planted in thy Country, and planted in the Church of God, and planted in thy Family, God will cut thee off from among thy people. Thus, poor wretch, thy disease is perhaps abated, and thou rejoycest in thy ease and health; but remember, thou hast got the *Devils blessing, and Gods curse.*

Secondly, This is that filthy sin of whoredom. See again, *Lev. 20. 6. The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits ——— to go a whoring after them.* Do not you account this a beastly sin, for people to

go up and down a whoring? Well, though thou thinkest thou keepest thy self honest, and wilt say, I thank God no body can touch me in my honesty; yet although all thy Neighbours judge thee to be honest, the Lord judgeth thee to be a filthy *Whore*, and *Whoremonger*: for though perhaps thou hast not defiled thy body with a Whore, yet thou hast defiled thy soul with the Devil, *Lev. 19. 31. Regard not them that have familiar spirits ——— to be defiled by them*; and thou mayst be assured, that the Devil will not heal thy body, except it be to kill thy soul; and thou dost hereby joyn that person to the Devil, which should be united to Christ; thou dost yield thy self to the power and will of the Devil: Hence those are the most ignorant, sottish, prophane, or covetous people, that seek to Witches. Beloved, we should do nothing, but what we may comfortably go from the doing of it into the presence of God in any duty, or to enjoy his presence into Eternity: Now, as a wife can have no delight to go from a whoremonger, into the presence or society of her husband; so how canst thou comfortably go from a Wizard to Prayer, to a Sacrament, or to a Sermon, or from a Wizard into Eternity?

Thirdly,

Thirdly, This sin is the most abominable sin of Idolatry, *Lev. 11. 31. Regard not them that have familiar spirits—— I am the Lord your God:* Implying, that they that seek to such, do deny God to be the Lord, and do disown him from being their God, and make the Devil and his Instruments their God. Idolatry is that sin whereby men forsake the true God, and set up any thing in the place of God; and this sin is so much the worse, by how much that is more vile, and more unlike God, and more against him, which thou makest an Idol of; and therefore this is the worst kind of Idolatry: for what is more vile, and more unlike God, and more against him, than an ugly damned Devil? yet by seeking to Wizards in thy distress, thou dost in effect deny the power, and goodness, and mercy of God; and accountest the Devil more able, and more merciful, and more willing to do thee good than God himself.

Lastly, This sin is an horrible violation of our Covenant with God, which we entered in by Baptism; for thereby we are bound to be for God, and Christ, and the Church, and Salvation, against the Devil and all his party: Now hereby thou goest against God, and ownest the Devil to be

- thy friend to heal thee. The Prophet pleads this argument against this sin, *Isa. 8. 19. When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto Wizards, that peep and mutter (do not be tempted thereunto) should not a people seek unto their God, the God in Covenant with them, but to the Devils and their Confederates, whom they have covenanted against? We have the same argument pleaded, 2 Kings 2. 3, 4. where we finde that Elijah meets Abaziah his messengers as they were going to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron; and he tells them in effect, You may spare your labour, for Abaziah shall die. But mark how he expostulates with them, vers. 3. Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? So Sirs, Is there not a God in England? And are there not means of his appointment? and are there not Ministers and Christians to pray for you, who are in league with him, but must you seek to such who are in league with the Devil? Beloved, do not you look upon your selves as parts and members of Jesus Christ? and will you bring a member of Christ to be healed by the Devil? What, hath the Devil more*
care

care of Christs members, then Christ himself? or hath Christ need of the Devil to help or heal ever a member of his? I tell you, Christ would not himself, and he abhors that ever a member of his should fall down, or worship, or stoop to the Devil.

Now to excuse this horrid sin, people ordinarily make such Objections as these.

Object. 1. My loving neighbours and friends gave me counsel to send to the wise woman for the health of my childe, &c.

Ans. 1. It is a device of Satan, when he tempts to sin, to make as many as he can partakers of it: and therefore in this case he may tempt one to give this devilish counsel, and thereby he signifieth he is willing of it, and so becomes guilty both of the sin it self, and of being a Devil to his neighbour, by tempting him to the same sin: another is tempted to take the counsel, and so both consents unto, and also commits the sin; another applauds it; another is hired to go to the Witch; the Witch her self is hardened in her sin: and thus the sin goes through many hands, and spreads over many persons; so that often in this case, many in the neighbourhood, and the whole family

where the person is visited, and many more are fearfully brought into the same condemnation.

2. Consider what persons they are who advise thee : Did ever any godly Minister or Christian give thee such counsel ? Did ever these loving friends and neighbours (as thou callest them) seriously tell thee of thy danger by sin , and exhort thee to become a new creature , and to set up the worship of God in thy family , and to labour for the salvation of thy precious soul ? I tell thee , thou mayest go to-hell with the love of such as thou callest loving neighbours , but that will not ease thy torments when thou comest there.

Lastly , Let thy Counsellors be who they will , the Word of God hath plainly prevented this objection , *Isa. 8. 19. When they shall say unto you , (when they shall give you this damnable counsel) Seek unto them that have familiar spirits , do not be tempted by them ; for should not a people seek unto their God ?*

2. Object, *Many in the like case seek to the wise-man, or wise-woman, as well as I ; they come far and near to them, for help.*

Ans. It is most certain , as long as such ignorant, unbelieving, covetous Atheists as thou

thou art, live in the world, *the Devil shall never want Customers*; and if thou wilt follow a multitude to sin, thou wilt finde when thou comest to hell, and standest at the left hand of Christ at the day of Judgment, that thou art never like to want such company.

3 Object. I know not that such is whom I seek for help, are in league with the Devil; I am sure they speak godly words of God and Christ, and they do no hurt; and therefore for ought I know, they are as godly people as any are in the Country.

I shall answer this Objection in these four particulars.

1. A Wizards using the Name of God, and Christ, or some Scriptures, excuseth not his being in league with the Devil; they that know not this, are grossly ignorant both of the wisdom and will of God, and also of the depths and devices of the Devil; for the Devil doth most despite and blaspheme God, when he conceals his own name, and forgeth the name of God to the most horrid wickedness; and therefore let not the cursed wretches deceive you with the name of God, and so bring you into communion with, and into the condemnation of the Devil; but follow the directions of the Word of God, which is pur-

posely given to undeceive those that are apt to be a prey to these delusions, *Isa. 8. 19, 20.* — *To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

2. Judge no better of them, because thou thinkest them so harmless: thou thinkest it's pity but such a *Hag* were burnt, who bewitcheth peoples bodies, children, cattel, &c. but thou sayest these do no hurt, but much good, in telling to stoln goods, in healing the sick, and curing diseased cattel, or the like. But beloved, this is but a pretence for the Devil; for his greatest *wiles* are to bring you to be tormented with him in hell: and therefore he is content you should be healthful, and wealthy, and merry, (for as we say, the Devil is kinde to his own) so that he can tempt you to be sinful: Hence it is, that he will entice you to seek to him for the healing your bodies, because it serves his designe to kill your souls: Besides, there is a confederacy among the Devils, so that one Witch by her league with the Devil, may bewitch you into sickness; another, by as bad a league, will (as it is termed) bless you into health; but though these seem to

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counter-work one another, yet the Devils in both agree to *devour* your souls.

3. It is enough to deter thee from ever seeking to such, when they are branded with the names of Witches, Wizards, Conjurers, &c. When they are so reputed, not onely by some malicious slanderers (for Christ himself was slandered as one who had commerce with the Devil, *Matth. 12. 24.*) but also by the voice of the country, and by the sober, wise, charitable and godly Ministers and people, who hear of their Clyents, and of their practice.

Lastly, this is a sufficient reason for all to abhor the thoughts of seeking to them, because they use such means, upon the use of which thou hast no Scripture-ground to believe, or call upon God for a blessing; as when they use inchanting words, spells, circles, herbs, salt, stones, &c. which have no natural virtue to work such effects: for these are but signes upon the use of which the Devil hath bound himself to his confederates, to do what they trust him for: For as *Peter Martyr* well observes, the Devil is herein Gods Ape to imitate him; and therefore as God hath made a covenant of grace with his people, and hath ordained Sacramental

mental signes and seals, upon the faithful use of which he is present to believers, to perform all that he hath promised in the Covenant. So the Devil makes a covenant with Witches, and appoints them to use certain signes and tokens, upon the use of which he is present to do (so far as he can, and God permits) all that they call upon him, and trust to him for: And thus you may see the nature, evil and danger of this horrid wickedness of seeking in your sicknesses to Witches and Wizards for health; that such as are guilty may repent

Act. 8.22. *and pray to God, that the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven them: and that others who may be tempted to this sin, may*
 Deut. 13. *hear, and fear, and do no more any such wickedness.*
 11.

Secondly, This Doctrine reproves those who are full of murmuring and discontent, when Christ visits them or their friends with sickness: If Christ commands diseases to go, there can be no reason to murmur; if Christ doth it, no body must finde fault: yet most people are very apt to this sin in time of sickness; for this is the property of a man, that what ever is most in his heart, when he is troubled, it presently riseth, and works up into his affections, thoughts,

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thoughts, looks, words and actions. I shall illustrate this by a clear similitude: Take two bottles of wine, the one with sugar, the other with dregs at the bottom; now shake them, and the sugar and dregs will rise and work up, and the one fills the wine with a sweet and pleasant taste, and the other will make it muddy and unpleasant both to taste and look upon: so if a godly man and ungodly man be visited with sickness, when the godly man is stirred and troubled, his graces will presently work, and the man will be full of faith, love, patience and prayer, which makes his words and carriage exceeding sweet and savoury; but when the wicked man is visited, the dregs of sin presently rise and work up, and his words and actions are then full of pride, anger and discontent, which make him sinful and unsavoury: so that I say a murmuring and discontented spirit usually prevails with men in sickness, or other afflictions. The Jews are often branded for this sin, which was so notorious in them, that the Scripture warns all people to take heed of murmuring for their sake, 1 Cor. 10. 10. *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.* Now to arm you against

against this sin, I shall briefly 1. Shew you the Nature and Properties of it; 2. The Causes, 3. The sad Consequences of it.

For the first, observe the nature of it in this description: *The sin of murmuring is an unruly, disobedient, and unquiet frame of spirit, whereby the heart riseth against God, so as to question and quarrel with him, as if he were unholty, cruel, unjust, and unmerciful in his proceedings against us.*

As by the grace of contentation the heart doth quietly and obediently yeild to the Will of God, so as to approve and praise all his dealings as holy, just and fatherly to him; so a discontented spirit doth resist God, and judge of all his dispensations, as if they were unworthy and injurious to him. This sin is further known by these four filthy properties.

1. It is a rebellious rising of the heart against God, especially as he appears in that Providence which is the present occasion of his murmuring. Hence murmurers are called *rebels*, Numb. 16. 41. for now all the powers of a man are up in a *tumult and insurrection* against God; the affections and thoughts rise up in a quarrel with him.

Shew him. Oh what a fearful case is this, that when a mans body is so weak that he cannot rise out of bed, yet his corruptions are so strong, that they rise in an uproar against the Will, and Authority, and Justice of God !

2. It is an unjust judging of God : for whatever the murmurer pretends, his quarrel is against God, as the cause of his visitation : Perhaps in thy sickness, thy discontented spirit flies out towards thy husband, wife, children, or servants which are about thee : but they may say with *Moses* to the Israelites, *Exod. 16. 8. What are we ? did we make thee sick ? are we the causes of thy aches and pains ?*) thy *murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord* : Nay, sometimes the spirit riseth so high, that it exprelly complains of God, as if the parties grieved would set themselves above him, and call him to their bar, and be the judges of God and his dispensations : so did the Israelites, *Numb. 14. 3. Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land?*--Oh horrid pride and insolencie ! they challenge God as if he had wronged and deceived them in bringing them from *Egypt* : Such men practice what *Jobs* wife tempted him unto in his sickness, *Job 2. 9. Curse God*

God and dye; they have cursed and blasphemous thoughts of God and his Providence; it appears that men do thus judge God, *Psal. 51. 4. That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest*; implying, that God is judged and condemned by wicked men; and therefore he is said to justify and clear himself: O thou proud worm, thou conceited clay, judge thy self, and not God; for he giveth not account of any of his matters; *Job 33. 13.* and to be sure he will overcome when he is judged. *Rom. 3. 4.*

3. A murmuring spirit makes his mercies little, and his afflictions great. This cursed property is seen in the Israelites; for although their deliverance from Egypt was such a Providence as God delights to be owned by: Hence he is so often called, *The God that brought them out of the land of Egypt*; and God chuseth this as a fit preface to the Ten Commandments, as if it were a sufficient reason to all to worship and obey him, *Exod. 20. 2. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, &c.* yet how often did the discontented Jews upbraid God with that mercie? *Would so God we had died in the land of Egypt!* *wherefore hast thou brought us out of the land*

*Exod. 16.
3. & 17. 3.*

land of Egypt? Thus many in sickness and pain forget the mercie of God in all the days of their health and life; in a few hours sickness, they forget a whole age of rich mercie.

Lastly, discontent frets and disquiets a mans self, *Psal. 37. 1.* and therefore it hurts them more then the affliction; as if man have a cut, or wound in his flesh, this will diseafe and trouble him: but if a fretting humour fall in the wound to vex and inflame it, this is far more hurtful and dangerous then the wound it self: so thy sickness must needs trouble thee; but if under thy visitation thy heart abound with proud and peevish humours, which makes thee fret against God; this makes thy condition far more miserable then the disease it self would make it.

Secondly, observe four Causes of Discontent.

1. Ignorance of Gods dominion over his creatures: this is clear by the parable of the labourers in the Vineyard, *Matth. 20.* where our Saviour doth silence the labourers murmuring about their wages with this, *Is it not lawfull for me to do what I will with mine own?* *vers. 15.* implying, that if they had known and considered that it was his own

own, they would have found no cause to quarrel: So many murmur in their sickness, to see worse sinners have their ease and health; but they do not consider that their life, health, and bodies, are Gods own, and all diseases are his own, and he sends them to whom he will; and though others have more mercy, yet they have no wrong: do not you put your Oxen to labour, and after that to the slaughter? yet if any question you for using the poor cattel so cruelly, you will not stick to tell them, Friends, we hurt nothing of yours, may we not do what we will with our own? Sirs, God hath a greater right over you, then you have over your cattel; if he disease you, and destroy you, he hurts nothing of yours; and therefore he may do what he will with his own.

2. Discontent ariseth from mens expectation of settlement in the world; for certainly they that trust to *vanity*, shall be filled with vexation of spirit; for disappointment always breeds discontent: as the Husbandman that dungs, and ploughs, and sows his ground, if his expectation of a crop be too great, and he doth not consider how many thousand dangers may come between the Plough and the Sickle, but reckon

reckon aforehand of so many measures for his family, and so many to pay rent, and so many for seed : now if the crop fail at harvest, here is a sad repining and discontent : so if a mans expectation of the world is too high, and having heaped up riches, he begins to bless himself, saying, I have so much for a purchase, and so much for portions for my children ; now if when he is just catching at them to use them, *they take* Prov.23; *themselves wings and flie away* ; no marvels. if they leave the owner murmuring at the Providence. When the Israelites were so miraculously saved from *Egypt*, they thought that deliverance had put a period to all their troubles ; and therefore every cross being a disappointment, sets them on murmuring : so they that promise themselves health, and ease, and plenty in the world, when sickness and want comes, they presently fret and complain ; whereas they that look and prepare for changes, live in a more composed and quiet frame ; if mercie comes, they are thankful ; and if affliction comes, they are content.

The third Cause of discontent is Unbelief. Hence the *Israelites* murmure, because they believed not the good report which

Joshua and Caleb gave of the land of Canaan, Numb. 14. 11. How long will it be ere they believe me for all the signes which I have shewed among them? Sirs, an unbelieving heart is always a discontented heart; for an unbeliever hath nothing to fill and quiet the heart with, in his afflictions: observe, every cross takes away something which did feed and please the heart, as health, riches, credit, pleasures and friends, &c. now when these are lost, a man doth, as it were, feel something go out of his heart; but then faith fills, and stills the heart, by bringing into it God, and Christ, and heaven: *Why art thou disquieted, O my soul! trust still in God, Psal. 43. 5.* but now God, and Christ, and the promises, and heaven, are nothing to an unbeliever, and so yeild him no peace and comfort; therefore he must

Isa. 57. 20. needs be like the troubled sea, when the storms and winds of affliction blow upon him, and he hath nothing to calm and comfort his soul.

Lastly, discontent ariseth from mens being so very sensible of the evil of affliction, and senceless of the evil of sin. Mens bodies are tender, and their senses quick, and therefore even the biting of a flea, the scratching of a Pin is presently felt: and
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men are so tender of their reputation, profits and delights, that the least touch in these is a cross to them: but their hearts are so hard, and consciences seared, that they can lye securely under all the curses of Gods book, and have mountains of wrath abide on them, and feel nothing; and therefore afflictions lye so heavie, because sin lyes so easie: Whereas, if a man knew what sin is, and saw at night what wrath he had treasured up all the day, he would rather wonder, that he were out of hell, then murmur that he were in trouble: this did silence the Church, when she remembered the *wormwood and the gall*; be- Lam 3.19; cause she knew that *it was of the Lords* ^{22.} *mercies, that she was not consumed*: therefore she pleads, Lam. 3. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain!* A man that deserves death and hell, cannot reasonably complain if he be alive; as it is unreasonable for a Thief that deserves to be hanged, to complain because he is whipt: And then it is added, *a man for the punishment of his sin*: Why should a man complain of that which he hath brought upon himself? *Solomon* speaks of this as very unequal, Prov. 19. 3. *The foolishness of a man perverteth his way*; that is, mans sin brings him into trouble,

and his heart fretteth against the Lord. Man is in all the fault, and he would have God to bear all the blame.

In the next place, observe four sad consequences of this Sin.

First, murmuring debaseth a man, by turning him into the likeness of the basest creature: we have a remarkable Scripture for this, in *Psal. 59.* in the sixth verse; *David* saith of his enemies, *They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the City;* that is, they go about like the *Devils beagles*, hunting Gods people: Well, saith *David*, vers. 14. seeing they love the sport so well, *At evening let them return, and make a noise like a dog, and go round about the City;* that is, let thy judgments so afflict them, that they may like hungry and angry Curs go crying and yelling about the City: so that here the murmuring of a man in trouble, is compared to the yelling of a dog; so this sin is compared to the roaring of Bears, *Isa. 59. 11.* *We roar all like bears:* and *Zanchy* observes, that the word *μυρομοι* translated *murmurers*, *Phil. 2. 14.* signifies a noise like the grunting of a swine: nay, this sin makes a man like the very Devil, who is a most restless and discontented spirit, and therefore is said,

said, *Matth. 12. 43. To walk about seeking rest, and finding none.* And it is true of many on their sick-beds, which we read, *Hos. 7. 14. They have not cryed unto me, when they have howled (viz. like beasts) upon their beds.* Now what a fearful case is this, that when in thy sickness thou shouldst have been full of the thoughts, and language, and savour of a Christian, so as to be praying un'to, and praising and pleasing God, and saving, and edifying others, and quieting and solacing thy own soul, that thou shouldst by murmuring and discontent, be yelling like a Dog, roaring like a Bear, howling like a Beast, grunting like a Swine, and be like a restless and desperate Devil!

Secondly, discontent unfits the soul for every duty: you cannot indure to see your children go grumbling to meat, and grumbling to School, and grumbling to bed, and grumbling to ask you blessing: so it greatly provokes God to see people go murmuring to prayer, and murmuring to Sermons, and murmuring to Sacraments. Beloved, lay this up as a rule, and let it always reign in your hearts, *viz. That a man can never go holily and comfortably to any duty, except his heart be reconciled to these three things:*

To God, to all men, and to all Gods Providences : Therefore when a man is quarrelling with God and men , and murmuring at all Gods dealings ; always either complaining that his mercies are too little, or his afflictions too great : how miserably unfit is such a man to look God in the face in any duty !

Thirdly, murmurers are always miserable, according to our Proverb, *An angry person never wants woe* ; as if a man that hath his body full of sores, come in a crowd where he is always jogged and thrust, this must needs hurt and vex his sores. Beloved, a discontented spirit is a sore spirit, and the least touch of affliction doth vex it : and therefore for such a man to live always in a croud of miseries, wherewith he is continually hurt and vexed, this must needs be a miserable man. It is observable, that God himself is set to cross such a man, *Lev. 26. 27, 28. If ye walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you* : As thus, God would have you to believe, love, fear, and please him : Now you walk contrary to God, you deny, hate, despise and provoke him : Well, you would have God to bless, preserve, pardon and save you : Oh but God will walk contrary to you, he will curse, destroy, and

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and damn you : Now they cannot but be in an unquiet condition, who have God himself always crossing and thwarting them. See *Psal. 18. 26. With the froward thou wilt shew thy self froward* : If you will be cross with God, he will be cross with you : and therefore observe when you are discontented, something falls out from Wife, Children, Servants or Neighbours, to exasperate and fret you more : so that I say this sin makes a man spend his days in bitterness and sorrow.

Lastly, murmurers shall be judged at the last day as ungodly men, *Jude v. 14, 15, 16.* where we see, that when the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, one great work of that day will be, to execute judgement on ungodly *murmurers and complainers* : therefore as you fear the portion of murmurers then, do not live the life of murmurers now.

Thirdly, this Doctrine reproves those who are so stupid and senceless in their sickness, as not to own the hand of Christ in their visitation : for seeing all diseases come from him, we are to receive them as the good messengers of Christ, saying with *Naomi, Ruth 1. 13. The hand of the Lord is gone out against me.* This stupidity of spi-

rit is that sin whereby men slight and despise the judgments of God, so as neither to be affected in the sense of their sins, nor of Gods displeasure for them: We have a clear instance of this sin, *Jerem. 10. 19.*

—— *I said truly, This is my grief, and I must bear it.* In the beginning of the verse, the people sadly bewail their present afflictions: *Woe is me for my hurt, my wound is grievous:* now it aggravates their present misery, to be upbraided with their former stupidity: *I said (viz. in my trouble heretofore) truly this is my grief, and I must bear it off* as well as I can; implying, that they formerly thought, that they could easily bear off the strokes of God. We often hear the like confident language from many stupid sinners on their sick beds, saying, Indeed I am not well, I am something out of order; but I will strive with it, and hope to shake it off shortly, and so go on with my building, or trading, or purchasing, &c. Thus usually men flatter themselves in their sickness, talking as if they were but beginning to live, when perhaps they are ready to die: these strive to put far from them the evil day, *Amos 6. 3.* Like those who boasted, that they had made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell, *Isa. 28. 15.*

as if they had made some bargain with Death and Hell, and had them in Bond and Covenant not to hurt them: this senseless spirit possess those, *Hos. 7. 9. Isa. 42. 25.* This sin is forbidden, *Prov. 3. 11. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord.* Beloved, it is a fearful thing to despise any affliction; perhaps yet it is but little, but it comes from a great God, and upon a great Errand: therefore remember, *Psalms 2. 11. If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Consider further the evil and danger of this sin, in two particulars.

First, It doth greatly provoke and call forth the wrath of God, *Isa. 26. 11. When thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, they will take no notice of thy displeasure; but they shall see:* Oh then is the judgment of God fearful on the ungodly, when Gods wrath puts them past security, when the *seared conscience* is turned into a *gnawing conscience*: I tell thee, sinner, if sickness will not awaken thee, hell will. You know if a Father whip his Childe to humble and melt him, it cuts the very heart of his Father to see his Childe laugh in his face: So when God visits a sinner with sickness, or other afflictions, if he scorn his Rod, it must

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must needs be an unspeakable provocation : for as it favours much of the spirit and grace of a Childe of God , to be suitably affected to the various manifestations of God , so that it is his most inward pleasure to have God pleased , this *puts gladness in to his heart* , Psal. 4. 6, 7. and if God in displeasure *hide his face, he is troubled* , Psal. 30. 7. so on the contrary , it is a sign of a base spirit , when, as it is said of *Miriams* disease , *God spits in his face* , then to be so shameless and impudent, as if he could out-face the frowns of his Majesty.

Secondly, This speaks a mans condition to be incurable , *Isa. 1. 5. Why should ye be stricken any more ? ye will revolt more and more* : as if they were grown so desperate, that corrections made them worse. Beloved , this stupidity doth frustrate the end and use of Gods Visitation ; for they cannot *hear the rod* , if they do not *feel the rod* , because the rod speaks by its strokes ; therefore they lose its teachings , when they do not feel it smart : the condition then of such wretches must needs be hopeless, when they make Gods last remedy useless : as when a man is sick , first you seek to restore him by keeping him warm , and by wholesome diet ; if this fail , you send to the

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the Physitian ; but if the Physick do not stir the body , if he will not vomit , nor purge , nor bleed , then you look for nothing but death : So when mercies will not melt , nor Sermons change a sinner ; and after all, God sends sickness, or other judgments, and yet these do not work , what remains but a fearful looking for of eternal judgment ? And now to conclude this, we may see the dreadful condition of senseless and secure sinners on their death-beds ; they say they have made their peace with God , when it is but a peace with sin , and an agreement with hell ; and that they hope for salvation , when perhaps the *Pulse* hath not many *strokes* to beat , before they are sure of damnation : yet they will go confidently with the foolish Virgins , as it were , to the door of heaven , till Christ tell them there to their faces , *he knows them not* ; and thus they die , *being wholly at ease and quiet* : and carnal friends think they have made a comfortable end , when for my part I do not doubt to say , it is as comfortable to see men *die drunk* , as *die secure*.

Fourthly , This doctrine reproves those who in their diseases trust to Physitians for health : Diseases (you see) are not at the com-

command of Physitians, but of Christ. This was *Asa* his sin, 2 *Chron.* 16. 12. in his disease *he sought not to the Lord, but to the Physitians.* His sin was not in seeking to the Physitians, but in not seeking to the Lord. I know it is a great sin, upon pretence of Gods power, to be disobedient to his will in despising Physick, which God hath ordained to be his means to restore us to health : this sin is a tempting God, wherein we will try what God can do, and yet neglect what he commands ; but we must use the Physitian, yet so, as to live by faith, and not by Physick : and therefore the rule is, to honour and use them as Gods Instruments, but not to put them in Gods place.

Fifthly, It reproves those who usurp Authority, and use their own power to hurt or disease the bodies of men ; I mean not those who have authority from God and man to execute bodily punishments, as Magistrates, Parents, Masters, &c. nor would I abrogate the Law of self-preservation in the case of a violent and unavoidable assault : but my aim is, to convince those of their sin, who delight in quarrelling and fighting ; who are said to *enter into contention*, Prov. 18. 6. who neglect

lect their callings to go to Cock-pits, Bear-baits, &c. on purpose to quarrel and fight; and such, who upon every little provocation, will be at daggers drawing; no more with them, but *a word and a blow, a lye and a stab*; and such *mankeen beasts*, who delight to feed on the wounds and blood of men, accounting it a piece of gallantry and bravery to beat, hurt, wound and maim others. Now if all diseases are at the command of Christ, so that he bids them go, &c. then thou shouldst not usurp Christs Authority, to hurt or disease others. Now that you may for ever abhor and be afraid of this sin, lay to heart these five Considerations.

First, This is a damnable sin; without speedy repentance, it will bring thee to hell: I say unto thee as *Paul* said to *Ananias*, Acts 23. 3. *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall*, for smiting thy brother: Oh look upon those strong arms and limbs burning with thy body and soul in hell! Oh consider, what a poor credit it is to go valiantly to hell! for this will be thy case: for if he that gives his brother but a foul word, be in danger of hell-fire, *Mt. 5. 22.* how much greater danger art thou in, who woundest and hurtest that body which
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God hath bound thee upon pain of damnation, in the sixth Commandment, to preserve!

Secondly, Consider what spirit worketh in thee, when thou art fighting and quarrelling with others: I say to thee, as *Job* in another case to his friend, *Job 26.4. Whose spirit came from thee?* Is this the holy, loving, humble, patient, meek, and peaceable spirit, which is so precious and savoury to God and men? Is this the way to please and honour the God of thy life, and limbs, and strength, who stands by, and looks thee in the face, and sees thee like a fool in thy rage? The Apostle clearly determines, that these *fightings* are fruits of your *lusts*, *James 4. 1.* And is this thy valour and gallantry, to fight so stoutly to fulfil a base lust?

Thirdly, Consider how thou dost hereby abuse thy own body: Is thy body a member of Christ, and thy hands and arms parts of Jesus Christ? and wilt thou make a member of Christ a murderer?

Fourthly, Consider the person whom thou smitest; Is he not one towards whom thou shouldst put on bowels of compassion, and whose salvation thou art bound to seek; and dost thou think to bring him to heaven

ven by *Club-law*? Is he not *fearfully* and wonderfully made by God, in whose book all his members are written? and wilt thou by thy inhumane and merciless blows mar such a choice piece of Gods workmanship? Is not, or may not his body be the *Temple of the Holy Ghost*, and an instrument to serve God and his generation? and wilt thou by maiming and wounding him, make him less serviceable? Nay further, he is made after the Image of the Invisible God; and I tell thee, in striking him, thou dost, as it were, strike God in the face.

Lastly, Consider the many sad and fearful consequences of this sin; it breeds malice and revenge, and causeth further quarrels and contentions among persons and families; it begets many chargeable suits at Law, to the expence of thy precious time and Estate: besides, men are hereby so fiesht with cruelty, and given to fight, that oftentimes the end of such, is either to be killed or hang'd.

Now for the defence of this cursed sin, men usually pretend these and such-like Objections; which I shall briefly answer, and so proceed to other Uses.

Object. 1. *Must I then be branded for a base*

base Coward, in suffering every one to abuse me?

Answ. He is a base Coward, that is so poor spirited as to serve a base lust, and to be a slave to a conquered Devil; but he hath a Divine Spirit that will do the will of God, and rule his own spirit, and conquer himself: therefore shew thy courage, by setting all thy might against thy sins. *Tertullian* useth this ingenious art to divert the Christians from beholding the spectacles of cruelty in the Heathenish Games, by directing them to behold how grace doth conflict with, and conquer over sin: *Behold* (saith he) *wantonness destroyed by chastity; falsehood slain by faith; cruelty beaten by mercy; malapertness overcome by modesty*, & tales sunt apud nos agones, in quibus ipsi coronamur; *and such are the conflicts with us, in which we are crowned.* *De spectaculis, cap. 29.* So I say, if thou lovest fighting, fight with thy sins, so shalt thou be crowned for a Champion, when a company of strong and stout fellows shall be damned for Cowards: besides, thou mayst have opportunity to shew thy self no Coward, when thou art called to suffer reproach, poverty, banishment, imprisonment, or death, for the sake of Christ; by thy

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thy chearful and obedient suffering of which, thou wilt be more then a Conquerour over sin, the world, death, and devils; when a company of proud Swaggerers, who venture their limbs and lives in quarrelling and fighting for the Devil, will basely turn Papists or Infidels, before they will venture any thing for Jesus Christ.

Object. 2. But I shall do them good by beating them, and make them rule their tongues, and carry themselves more civilly hereafter.

Ans^r. Thou mayst do them good by thy graces, but never expect to do them good by thy sins. The Scripture directs thee to a better way to do thy enemy good, *Mat. 5. 44. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Rom. 12. 21. Overcome evil with good:* And *Solomon* tells us, that *Prov. 25. a soft tongue, and not a hard cudgel, breaketh the bone.*

Object. 3. How then must I live? I can never be in quiet, I am abused by such that would provoke any man alive to strike them.

Ans^r. I confesse the world is full of many daring contentious spirits, whose mouths call for strokes, *Prov. 18. 6. and who, as*

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Austin speaks, carry the Devil in their tongues: But this will not excuse thee; if thou canst not rule their tongues, rule thy own hands. Remember *David*; how was that Royal person rated by *Shimei*? 2 Sam. 16. 7. Come out, come out thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. — But see how *David* takes it, vers. 10, 12. Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse *David*: It may be the Lord will look upon my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day. I would therefore seriously advise thee, when thou art thus provoked, to see heaven and hell looking thee in the face, and hear the Scripture crying in thy conscience, *Render good for evil*, and go to heaven; but, *Render evil for evil*, and go to hell. This may work thy heart into *David's* frame, which appeared in his carriage towards *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 13. *Wickedness proceeds from the wicked, but my hand shall not be upon him*: So when thou art provoked by the insolent behaviour of unreasonable men, say, *Wickedness proceeds from the wicked*; I can expect no better from such, but I will leave my cause with God, for I am resolved, that *my hand shall not be upon him*.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, This Doctrine reproves those who threaten to do hurt and mischief unto others: This was *Jezabels* sin, who threatned to slay *Elijah*, as he had caused *Baals* Prophets to be slain, *1 Kings* 19. 2. *So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them, by to morrow about this time.* Thus *Saul* is said to breath out threatnings and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, *Acts* 9. 1. and so those bloody Jews bound themselves under a curse, that they would neither eat A^d. 23. 12 nor drink till they had killed *Paul*. And so many threaten others, that they will be even with them, that they will do them a mischief, or that they will be the death of them: Now thou seest, that power to hurt, or disease, or any other way to trouble a man, belongs to *Jesus Christ*; and what ground hast thou to expect that *Christ* will exercise his power to fulfil thy lusts? besides, this is a fearful curse of God upon many, that they are so far left to themselves, as to will, and intend, and threaten mischief, and thereby bring guilt upon their own souls; and yet are never able to finish their sin, so as to do the hurt they intend to others: and this is a very torment to many a malicious wretch, that he

lives travelling with iniquity, and yet is never able to bring it forth. Furthermore, how darcest thou threaten to do a man hurt, when thou art bound to pray to God to do him good, yea, and to preserve him from that very evil which thou threatnest against him? Again, it often appears, that God intends the very same mischief to thee, which thou intendest to others, *Psal. 35. 8. Let his net that he hath bid catch himself, into that very destruction let him fall.* But to conclude this, consider, that when many a man is threatening and devising mischief to others, a disease from Christ doth suddenly take him and turn him to hell, before he can bring it to pass.

Seventhly, It reproveth the great wickedness of such who curse others, by wishing diseases or other judgments upon them: We often hear such horrible speeches as these, A plague on him, a pox on him, &c. as if they, and not Christ, had power to command diseases to go, and they will go; or as if the power of Jesus Christ must be the servant and instrument of a proud, froward, and malicious heart: This sin is forbidden to be used towards our worst enemies, *Rom. 12. 14. Bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not: and it is made*

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made the signe of a graceless man, to have *his mouth full of cursing*, Rom. 3. 14. for his heart is full of pride, malice, and anger, and these fill his mouth with cursing. Consider, if thou curse others, God will curse thee, *Psal. 109. 17, 18, 19. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him.* — Consider further, some will curse their friends, their husbands, wives, or children; and sometimes God hath punished such cursed speeches in bringing their curses to pass. We read of a Mother that in a passion cursed her Son thus: *Get thee gone, I would thou mightest never come again alive*: and the same day her Son went into the water, and was drowned: Another woman said in her anger to her Childe, *The Devil take thee*; and presently the poor childe was possessed with the Devil. These, and many more such dreadful examples should make all afraid of such, or any other words of cursing. Consider once more, that every man should have his heart filled with love unto, and earnest desires of the good of all men, and should be always in a frame to offer up these desires in prayer to God: Now how contrary to this is that devillish spirit which inclines thee to hate and to curse others! The Apostle *James* sets out

the great hypocrisie and wickedness of a man, who with the same tongue will bless God, and curse men, *James 3.9, 10. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing: My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

Lastly, This Doctrine reproves those who hasten diseases and death to themselves by their own sins: I may reason with such sinners in *Solomons words, Eccles. 7. 17. Be not over-much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldst thou die before thy time?* It is not meant the time absolutely appointed by God, for that cannot be prevented; but it's meant that time, which in the course of nature they might have probably lived unto; as a Lamp will burn till the Oyl be spent, but it may be quencht, or blown out sooner: So in the course of nature, many a man might have probably lived many a year, but oftentimes, either by a sudden blast of God, or by some diseases which are bred by his own sins, the lamp of his life is quickly blown out; and some of such sins I shall here particularly reprove: I might instance in that horrible sin of self-murder, which ordinarily proceeds

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proceeds from pride, unbelief, revenge, covetousness, discontent, or despair: when men cannot despise God and man enough by their lives, they will attempt to do it by their deaths, and will venture with their own hands to cut the thred of their own lives, and to loose themselves out of the troubles of earth into the torments of hell.

I might also mention the horrid sins of Treason, Murder, Witchcraft, Theft, &c. which sins binde their bodies to the wrath and justice of men, and their souls and bodies to the wrath and vengeance of God; These sins bring men to be hanged like dogs, because they could not be contented to live like men. I shall instance in these five sins which do provoke God to visit men with diseases, some of which do of their own nature bring men to untimely sickness and death.

1. Persecution of Gods people: This is a sin which doth not only bring everlasting damnation hereafter, but usually it also brings some fearful judgments on the bodies and families of Persecutors here. Hence we read, *Psalms 55. 23. Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their daies.* It would take up far more room

then I can here spare, to instance in the fearful examples of Gods vengeance upon the very bodies of the cruel enemies of Gods Church and people: whereby we might see, that all the cruelty which the most barbarous persecutors have invented to torment the Christians with, hath not been comparable to those torments wherewith God hath tortured their Enemies with fearful and strange diseases. We read of that bloody *Herod*, who murdered the Infants, *Matth. 2. 16.* that he was smitten by the hand of God with a most shameful and painful disease, so that his body boiled and burnt with heat, and his bowels were gnawn: he was tormented with a ravenous and insatiable appetite after meat: his privy parts were rotten, and full of filthy vermine: and after he had endured a while the horrible pangs of a lingering death, he died in desperate madness and misery: See *Eusebius Ecclesiastic. Histor. Lib. 1. Cap. 8.*

Tertullian, amongst other examples of the like kinde, reports, that one *Claudius Herminianus* in *Cappadocia*, being enraged that his Wife was turned Christiani, to revenge himself, did exercise much cruelty upon

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upon the precious Christians; for which God did smite him with a fearful plague, wherewith after a while he was tormented, he dyed, *ad Scapulam, cap. 3.*

Steven Gardiner, a bloody butcher in *Queen Maries* days, hearing that Bishop *Ridley* and Master *Latimer* were burned at *Oxford*, rejoyced greatly, and being at dinner ate his meat merrily; but whilst the meat was in his mouth, the wrath of God came upon him, so that he was taken from his board to bed, where continuing, fifteen days in intolerable anguish, by reason he could not expel his urine, his body being miserably inflamed within, he was brought to a wretched end, with his tongue all black and swoln, hanging out of his blasphemous mouth.

I shall conclude this, by warning all that either love their souls, lives, or posterity, or country, to take heed of wronging the precious people of God, the truth is, the Nation, which persecutors are a curse unto, and the souls of persecutors themselves are dearer to godly Christians, then all their own private interest which persecution can take from them: and therefore I say to all malicious enemies, as *Tertullian* said to *Scapula*, a Ruler in *Carthage*, and a cruel enemy

enemy to Christians. *Parce tibi, si non nobis : parce Carthagini, si non tibi* — Spare thy self if thou wilt not spare us ; spare Carthage, if thou wilt not spare thy self. So I say, if ye will not spare the holy people of God, spare your selves ; if ye will not spare your selves, spare your families, spare your poor children ; if you will not spare your families, spare the precious nation, spare *London*, spare *England* ; for you swallow up all, by swallowing up Gods people.

The second sin which I shall here reprove, is unworthy receiving the Lords Supper. God often punisheth this sin with bodily diseases. Hence we read, *1 Cor. 11. 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep* : Now that you may know the evil and danger of this sin, I shall shew you what it is to eat and drink the Lords Supper unworthily : A man eats and drinks the Lords Supper unworthily, when he is without the gracious qualifications which make the heart fit, and meet, and agreeable to this blessed Ordinance. The best way to understand this, is to consider what is in the Ordinance, and what is in the heart ; and then by comparing them together, to see whether they do meet and agree :

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gree : as for example, in the Lords Supper
Jesus Christ crucified, with all the blessings
of the Gospel are shewed forth, 1 Cor. 11.
26. well, and there is a Believer who by faith
sees and discerns the Lords Body, as it is
set forth therein : now such a heart and
the ordinance do meet ; the heart agrees,
and is suitable to the ordinance, and so is fit,
and worthy to receive it ; but on the other
hand, here is a dead unbelieving sinner
that hath no principle or faculty to discern
Jesus Christ, or to receive him as hereby
offered ; therefore he comes unworthily, he
is not fit ; for his heart and the ordinance
do not agree, but he is like a blinde man
before the most glorious shew. Again,
here is spiritual food, meat indeed, and
drink indeed, to feed and satisfie a soul,
with grace, and pardon, and salvation: Well,
and here is a poor soul hungring and thirst-
ing after this very food. Now such a man
is fit, and comes like a hungry man to a
good and wholesome feast ; but here is a-
nother dead sinner that sees and feels his
want of nothing, and so is no more fit and
meet for such an ordinance, then a man that
lyes dead in a Coffin is to eat the bread and
wine which is dealt at his funeral : nay,
further, you may see the unworthiness of a
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wicked man, in that his heart is against the Lords Supper; as a man is very unfit for a feast, when he loaths, and his stomach doth rise against every dish on the table, and against all the company: So, my Brethren, a man is very unfit for the Lords Supper, when his heart hates and riseth against Christ, and against holiness, against all godly Christians. Sirs, here is set before us that which condemns all sins, and which requires the greatest strictness and holiness: so that to be sure the man that hates Christ in a Minister, or in a Christian, cannot but hate him in the Lords Supper. Well, you see who are unworthy, and who by this sin bring diseases and other judgements of God upon themselves in this life, and also damnation on their bodies and souls in the life to come. I might here also tell you, that the godly themselves, for want of the present exercise of grace suitable to this Ordinance, may bring diseases and death upon themselves; for as Christ with all his benefits is herein actually set forth, so grace should actually come forth to meet him, to take, receive, and enjoy him; as when a feast is ready drest and disht up, those that are fit guests must not onely have life and stomachs, &c. but they must also actually

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eat and drink. The application is easie: I shall therefore conclude this reproof in seriously warning all to take heed of unworthy receiving the Lords Supper: would any man eat that which he knows would breed the Pestilence, or the Fever, or the Drop-sie? Why, Christ tells you, if you come unworthily, *you eat and drink judgement to your selves*: And certainly, though the food be precious and wholesome, and it is your duty to receive it worthily; yet by unworthy receiving, you do that which may bring the Plague, Pox, Fever, &c. upon you, and without sound repentance will bring damnation upon your bodies and souls for ever.

The third sin to be here reproved, is *niggardlinefs*: this is a sin whereby men refrain from themselves the lawful use of the creature; they have not hearts to take and use the creatures to those ends which God hath made them good for, but basely defraud their own backs and bellies, by grudging themselves the meat, drink, clothes, recreations, phylick, which nature requires, and God allows: The word speaks expressely against this sin, *Eccles. 6. 12.* such men play the thieves, in robbing God of the honour, and themselves of the use
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of these mercies : and they love their states better then themselves ; and by preserving their riches, they diseafe and destroy their own bodies.

4. Drunkenness, to which may be added the sin of gluttony. The former brings themselves to untimely sicknesses and death by taking too little of Gods creatures, and these by taking too much. Consider the evil and danger of this sin of drunkenness in these five particulars.

1. Drunkenness doth *unman* the drunkard, and turns him into a very beast. Hence saith the Prophet, *Hos. 4. 11. Whoredom and wine, and new wine take away the heart.* This is given as one reason of the peoples wickedness mentioned in this Chapter, because they were so besotted with drunkenness and whoredom, which sins took away all knowledge and wisdom from them. *Augustine* saith, *Ebrietas est blandus demon, quam qui habet, seipsum non habet.* Drunkenness is a flattering Devil, which be that bath, bath not himself. Drunkenness is *voluntaria insania*, wilful madness, as *Seneca* speaks : A Drunkard, though at other times he may be learned, yet now he can neither understand, discourse, see, go,

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ride, nor do any business as becomes a reasonable man : look on a drunkard, and consider, yonder goes one with the immortal soul and precious body of a man ; yonder staring eyes, stammering tongue, staggering limbs, would, if they were filled with the Spirit, be precious instruments to honour God, and become blessings to man ; but what a beastly creature is he made by this filthy sin !

2. A drunkard is unfit for any employment, he is good for nothing : Who will venture his business with a drunken Servant ? or his life with a drunken Physician ? or his soul with a drunken Minister ? how many thousand of mens lives have been lost by drunken souldiers ? Whatever a mans estate be, he may be cheated of all when he is drunk.

3. A drunkard is unfit for all societies, and that for divers reasons : I shall mention but this one, *viz.* a man cannot commit a secret to a drunkard ; who will chuse such a friend to whom a man can speak nothing, but what he will have proclaimed in every Alehouse or Tavern in the Country ? Now what ever a man says to a drunkard, no body knows but that the next time he is drunk, he will tell all.

4. Drunk

4. Drunkenness betrays a man to all sin: for a man at the best is full of the principles of Sin: Now drunkenness is apt to set all a work, and leaves a man incapable of many restraints which might be used to a sober person; who knows what a man full of sin may do in his drunken mood, when he hath neither grace, nor reason, nor counsel of others, nor fear, nor shame to restrain him? and therefore what horrid sins are committed in drunkenness! swearing, cursing, whoring, fighting; yea, and murdering also. *Clitus* was a dear and faithful friend to *Alexander*, yet *Alexander* murders him when he was drunk, though he was ready to kill himself for it when he was sober.

Augustine reports, that a son of one in *Hippo*, who was too much cockered by his Father, came home drunk, in which sin he would have ravished one of his Sisters, slew his Father, and wounded to death two of his other Sisters.

Lastly, drunkenness shuts a man out of heaven, and by untimely sicknesses and death hastens him to hell. The Apostle assures us, 1 Cor. 6. 10. that no drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God. Oh what a fearful sin is this! it hurries a man into eter-

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nity, and sinks him into hell when he comes there : drunkenness is a sin which of its own nature breeds Dropsies, Consumptions, and other diseases, as we read, *Hof. 4. 7. The Princes makes themselves sick with bottles of wine* ; and daily examples witness the sudden and untimely death of many drunkards : It is reported of one, that when he was drunk, as he was getting up on his Mare, he said in a drunken frolick, that his Mare would carry him to the Devil ; and his Mare threw him down and broke his neck. Sirs, do not venture to be drunk, lest you fall into hell before you be sober.

The last sin which I shall here reprove, is the beastly sin of whoredom : This is a sin against a mans own body, *2 Cor. 6. 18.* hence we read, *Prov. 6. 26. The Adulteress will hunt for the precious life.* See further *Prov. 7. 22. 26. 27. He goeth after her as an ox goeth to the slaughter. For she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.* And thus you see, that by this filthy sin, men and women sacrifice their health, estates, names, bodies, and souls to their stinking lusts, carrying a filthy

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and guilty soul in a rotten body whilst they live, and shutting themselves out of heaven into hell when they dye. Now that this use of reproof may leave some deep conviction in your consciences, consider what thy health and life is given thee for, viz. that thou mayst have opportunity of serving and honouring the great God, and of providing for eternity: Now therefore what a bloody wretch art thou to thy self, that thou shouldst by thy own sins shorten thy space of repentance, and put a sad period to all thy blessed opportunities, and days of Salvation, and dispatch thy self beyond all ordinances, and means, and hopes, and possibilities of Salvation, and so make thy self *unable to live* before thou art ready to dye!

Use 3. Of Consolation to the truly godly.

This Doctrine is a great ground of comfort to all the children of God, whereby they may see that all sicknesses, dangers, and deaths come through the hands of their own father: for it is a most certain way of comfort to the godly in any sickness, to
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bring their hearts to the first Cause and Author of their Visitation ; for if they are at peace with him, they will be sure to finde peace and comfort in their affliction. Hence the Apostle teacheth us, *Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing* (that is, do not torture, and distract, and break your hearts with sinful cares and fears) *but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God :* (bring your hearts and desires unto him) *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mindes through Christ Jesus.* Perhaps thou hast nothing to keep thy estate from loss, nor thy body from aches and pains, nor thy name from reproach , nor thy life from death. But however, thou shalt have the peace of God to keep thy heart full of grace and comfort through Christ Jesus ; and if the heart be thus kept, the blessing and comfort of all is kept in it ; for in this case thou mayst lose friends out of thy company, riches out of thy estate, health and ease out of thy body, and yet thou mayst keep the peace and comfort of all in thy heart.

Now that your hearts may be refreshed with this Doctrine, I shall shew

herein these five grounds of comfort.

1. In respect of the season of the visitation. 2. Of the end. 3. In respect of the godly themselves who are visited. 4. In respect of death. Lastly, in respect of the day of judgement.

1. In respect of the season of our Visitation, we may be assured that Jesus Christ will chuse the best and fittest season to visit us in. See 1 Pet. 1.6. *Wherein ye greatly rejoyce, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations*: This is an argument of comfort, that our afflictions come in a season when we have most need of them. Husbandmen know that there is a season when the ground hath need of frost and snow; and parents know that there is a season when their children have need of the rod: And so there are seasons, wherein we that are

1 Cor. 3. 9. *Gods husbandry*, and Gods children, have need of his fatherly chastisements; and in these times he chuseth to visit us.

I shall contract all that I will say of this, in the application of a general truth to this particular case, viz. that the time and season of Gods remarkable Providence, is called the *fulness of time* in Scripture: So we read, Gal. 4. 4. *When the fulness of*
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time was come, God sent forth his Son — so that place seems something pertinent to our purpose, *Eph. 4. 10. That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.* Where note, that this is the great and mysterious work of God, to gather together in one full body all his Elect, that those which are already in heaven, with those who are to be gathered out of the world, may all meet in Christ their Head; and so be the *fulness of him that fills all in all*: Now this work is said to be done *in the fulness of time*: So that this is the glorious work which God is carrying on by ordinances, mercies, afflictions, diseases, death; he is gathering all his people together, bringing them into a body unto their head; and, I say, this is all done in the fulness of time.

Now there are two things which make a fulness of time.

1. When it's a time set and appointed by God for such a dispensation; a time full of the Decree and Counsel of God, and wherein his Decrees are fulfill'd: So the coming of Christ was in the fulness of time, *viz.* in the time set by God.

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2. When time is fitted and prepared for such a work ; in which respect also Christ came in the fulness of time : time had been travelling, as it were, for this many ages : Prophecies , and promises , and the faith and expectation of Believers were full of Jesus Christ ; and so the time being fitted for his coming, he comes in the *fulness of time*.

Now to apply this to the case in hand ; whenever sickness or death comes, it is in the fulness of time.

1. In that time which is set by the wisdom and counsel of our Father, for the good of his children ; he set the time of thy birth, and of thy new birth : so he hath appointed the time of thy visitation, and of thy death ; which are all times appointed to demonstrate and glorifie his infinite power and love towards thee.

2. They come in a time most fit for such a work. Sin grows to such an head , that it's time for sickness, or some other affliction to come and bring it down : Grace grows to such a strength, that now it's able to bear a trial : a storm is ready to fall ; therefore, saith God, now it's to time to fetch my childe home : The Christian is grown so ripe, that it's
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time to bring him to heaven, as a *shock of corn in its season*. Thus you see for your comfort, that sickness and death come from Christ in the best and fittest season: Sickness never comes, but to bring thee nearer heaven; and Death shall never come, but to loose thee into heaven. Ah Christian! heaven and happiness never come out of season.

Secondly, Comfort, in respect of the end of all sicknesses and death; they come from Jesus Christ for our good. We read, 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*: where we see, that in all our afflictions there is a secret Power working us to heaven and salvation. As for example, in a Fever, Ague, or Consumption &c. we feel a Power working outwardly against us, against our health, strength, ease, and life; so there is a mighty Power working inwardly for us, working us from sin and the world, to God, and Christ, and Heaven. Hence is that known and tryed Scripture; I say, it's a tryed Scripture, it hath comforted many thousand hearts, I mean Rom. 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to*

them who are called according to his purpose. Methinks this Scripture is a Spring which always runs with new and fresh comfort; and it's a sure way to finde comfort, to look upon all our diseases, and other afflictions, through this Scripture. Now to apply the comfort of it to the present case, consider what is that good which all things work together for; and this you may know by the following verses, wherein the Apostle demonstrates this truth, *That all things work together for our good*: therefore, saith he, vers. 31. *What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* that is, let us look upon all our afflictions and miseries, and then look upon our Predestination, Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, mentioned vers. 29, 30. And we may joyfully conclude, that seeing God is for us, so as to predestinate, call, justify, and glorify us; and these links can never be broken; then nothing can be against us, but all shall work for our good. so that the great good that all things work for, is not to make the godly the great Gallants of the world, but to bring them grace and peace here, and glory hereafter: and all sicknesses, diseases, and deaths, and all other dispensations,

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ons, are united and joyned together in this work, to bring Soul-saving good to them that love God. And the clear cause of this is in the Doctrine, *viz.* because our Saviour hath the working of all these things; he sends, and rules, and governs them: and therefore there must needs be a Fatherly work in them, because Jesus Christ, as our Father and Saviour, sends them to us, and orders them for us: That of the Apostle makes clearly for this, *1 Cor. 3. 23. Death is yours*: and by the same rule, sickness is ours, and for our good. But why ours? *Ans.* Because the Lord of sickness and death is ours. Hence we read, *Phil. 1. 21. To die is gain*. Sickness is gain, and death is gain to Gods Children. Many a Childe of God gains more by a moneths sickness, then by the outward mercies of many years; and death will bring you more gain in one hour, then all the prayers, and Sacraments, and Sermons of a whole age: and therefore labour to see your gains as real and present to the eye of Faith, as your pains, troubles and losses are to the eye of Sense: and in your sad parting with those things which sickness and death take you from, comfort your hearts with those things which they bring you

you unto; say, Farewel my dear and pleasant Country, thou hast fed me well, and cloathed me well, but I must leave thee for a better Country, that is, an heavenly, *Hebr. 11. 26.* Farewel my inward and faithful friends; farewel my dear *Jonathans!* How pleasant have you been to me! Your love to me is wonderful: Methinks when I am with you, I feel the truth of *Tertullians* saying of the fellowship of the Primitive Christians: *Animo animique miscemur; Our very hearts and souls do enter into, and are mingled and united with one another.* Many a sweet meeting and sad parting I have had with you; but I must leave you a while, to go to better friends in Heaven: *Magnus illic nos charorum numerus expectat; * I have a great company of dear friends in the other world which look for me, and will rejoyce to see me with them; with whom I shall always be serious, yet never sad; always merry, and yet never vain.*

* *Cyprian. de mortalitate.*

Farewel my sweet Sabbaths, savoury Sermons, melting Sacraments; farewel my dear Bible, and all the blessed Ordinances, wherein I have seen the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living. I must no longer look in these glasses, but go where

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where I shall see him face to face. 1 Cor. 13.

Farewel my dear yoke-fellow, parents, 12.
my sweet children, my beloved brothers
and sisters; I must leave you all, to go to a
better Father, and Husband, and Brother
in heaven.

Farewel my good and convenient house,
my sweet place of secret and Family-
worship! I must be gone to my house
not made with hands, eternal in the hea- 2 Cor. 5.1.
vens.

Farewel my poor, but precious body!
go thou and sleep in Jesus in the earth,
whilst my Soul is reigning with Jesus in
heaven, where I shall remember thee, and
long to see thee, till I meet thee again
cloathed with Immortality and Glory.
These things, Christians, are the comforts
of a sick-bed, the sweet joys of a death-
bed.

3. Comfort, in respect of the godly
who are visited: Herein is thy comfort,
that thou art a true part and member of
Jesus Christ, from whom all diseases come;
so that whatsoever Christ doth to thee, he
doth to himself: *I was sick*, saith Christ,
when his members were sick, *Mat. 25. 36.*
So when the body is dead, the poor ghastly
corpse continues still joyned and united
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to Jesus Christ. Hence the bodies of believers are said to *sleep in Jesus*, and are called *the dead in Christ*, 1 Thes. 4. 14, 16, and it's a most sweet and savoury consideration, when a man looks on such a sad spectacle as a loathsome diseased body, or thinks on the rotten carcass when the body is dead and *sown in corruption*, then to fix the eye of Faith upon his glorious head, at the right hand of the Father: As thus; look on thy face covered with the Small Pox, and then look on the Face of Jesus Christ: look on thy bones itaring upon thee in a Consumption, and then look upon the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ. Nay, go further, look upon thy self as it were in the grave, and see thy ghastly skull lying in the dust among the worms of the earth, and then look on thy glorious Head in Heaven: and so comfort thy self with this, that as vile and loathsome a spectacle as thy diseased body is now, and thy dead body will be shortly, yet it is a precious member of Jesus Christ, who will by his infinite power, change and fashion this contemptible dust *into the likeness of his glorious body* in heaven.

Phil. 3. 21.

4. Comfort, in respect of death; it comes

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comes to the godly without a *sting*: In this we are taught to triumph, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56. *O death, where is thy sting?* — Now to clear up your comfort in this, consider, that sickness and death are said to sting, when God as a revenging Judge sends them to execute the curse of the law for sin; so that death is compared to a fearful Serpent, which kills and devours all the men and women in the world: And, saith the Apostle, *the sting of this Serpent Death, is sin*; it's sin that makes the sting; and then he adds, *the strength of sin is the law*: The strength that sin hath to sting, is from the curse of the Law, and the Law hath its strength and power from the wrath of God; for *the law worketh wrath*, Rom. 4. 15. So that by all you see, that by the sting of death is meant the dreadful torments of hell, which at death come from the wrath of God through the curse of the Law for sin. O poor Christless sinner! what a miserable case art thou in? Look well as thou sittest in thy seat, and thou mayst see this stinging Serpent Death lye under thy feet; when thou liest down, this Serpent lies under thy bed; when thou art at meat, this Serpent lies under thy table; when thou goest out of thy

thy house, thou mayst see this Serpent at the door, ready to sting thee to death. But now here comes in the unspeakable comfort of believers; for though death hath power to kill them, yet it hath no power to sting them; because all the causes of Deaths sting are taken away by Jesus Christ.

1. Sin is gone; for this *lamb of God hath taken away the sins of the world*, John

1. 29. Observe, they are taken away, as if they had never been. Hence, 1 Pet.

24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*: So that by the righteousness of Christ given to us by God, and received of us by Faith, and thereby made our own, we are fully cleared and absolved from sin, and God will never impute it to us.

2. It follows, that the curse of the Law is gone; for *Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*: So that the law hath no strength to binde us to punishment, there being neither sin to binde us for, nor punishment to binde us unto.

3. The wrath of God, which makes the punishment, is also taken away, for *it is God that justifieth*, Rom. 8. 33. and we have thereby

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thereby peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 1. So that God is ours, and for us, to love, bless, and save, and glorifie us : and therefore every believer may with comfort hold up the Blood of Christ in the very face of the *King of Terrors*, and say, Here is my Christ, my righteousness; but, *O death, where is thy sting?*

Nay further, Death is now changed from coming to execute the curses of the Law, for it comes to fulfil the blessings of the Gospel; for death to a believer, is a work of a reconciled Father, whereby he looseth his childe out of earth into heaven; so that we may see death so full of the love and goodness of God, that it should even indear it to us, and make it lovely and precious to our souls. That is a most comfortable promise, *Job. 8. 51. Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.* It is not meant, he shall never die, as the Jews understood it, *ver. 52.* And I conceive it is not only intended, he shall never die the second death; but the meaning also seems to be this, that a Childe of God shall see so much of God, and Christ, and Heaven, that he may even overlook the fears of death, which

which are swallowed up by God, and Christ, and Life.

Lastly, Comfort, in respect of our glorious victory over all diseases, and death, at the day of Judgment. This victory consists in two things.

1. In putting a final period to all diseases, and death : Sicknes shall never trouble us more, and death shall never kill us more : I warrant thee Christian, thy head will never ake in heaven, and for certain there will be no Funerals in that Countrey, *try, but corruptible must put on incorruption, and mortal shall put on immortality.*

1 Cor. 15.
54.

2. In that the bodies of believers shall then be never the worse for the diseases and death which they have suffered ; but the bodies which were sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory.

1 Cor. 15.
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Heb. 10.
37, 38.

Beloved, a Saint may live comfortably in any condition, by living in the joyful knowledge of the day of judgment. Hence, when the Apostle had propounded this as an argument of comfort, that yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry ; He adds this, *Now the just shall live by faith* : meaning, they shall live a life of holiness and comfort in be-

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lieving the day of judgment. And Saint Paul having made a glorious description of that great day, *1 Thes. 4. 15, 16, 17.* makes this use of it, *vers. 18. Wherefore comfort one another with these words:* And in this the godly did comfort themselves, *Rom. 8. 23. And not only they, but our selves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of our bodies.* This is a most comfortable life, to live as those that are always groaning and waiting for the day of judgment. A believer may apply this to his comfort against any particular trouble: Art thou disgraced and reproached in thy name? summon, as it were, all thy accusers to the day of judgment, and believe what a name thou shalt have then, and that thou shalt be sure to come off with credit at that day, when the glorious Judge of quick and dead shall confess thee before his Father, and Angels, and Men: and as mean and obscure as thou seemest now, the world will have other thoughts of thee, when they see thee *appear with Christ in glory, Col. 3. 4.* And therefore we learn, that one great work of that day will be, to make a clear and open *manifestation of the sons of God, Rom. 8. 19.*

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Art thou troubled with unreasonable and wicked men, so that thou mayst say with David, *My soul is among Lyons*, and *I lye even among them that are set on fire* Psal. 57. 4. Consider what Christ will do to them at the day of judgment, and what work the great shout will then make among the prophane Swaggerers and Ranters of the world.

So when thou art troubled with diseases and the fearful thoughts of death, consider thy glorious victory over them at the day of judgment, 1 Cor. 15. 54. *When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* Look on this corruptible and mortal body, which is now sometimes so loathsome with diseases, that a man can scarce endure to carry it about him, or to lie with it, and will shortly be so contemptible, that the worms of the earth will crawl and feed all over it; and these very arms, and thighs, and legs, may be thrown up, and lie like the bones of horses and sheep at the graves mouth; yet the day is coming, when this corruptible and mortal body shall put on immortality and glo-

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ry: and, saith the Apostle, *Then, at that day, shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* Beloved, here diseases conquer the strongest bodies, and death overcomes the lives of the best and greatest men, and the grave devours and eats up our flesh; but then we shall obtain a glorious victory over all, when in despite of them, the bodies of Believers shall be raised incorruptible and immortal; and diseases, death, and the grave, which have prevailed for so many thousand years to swallow up so many millions of men and women, shall themselves be swallowed up of life, and swallowed up in victory. 2 Cor. 5.4.

Last Use is of Exhortation.

I shall conclude this discourse with a Use of Exhortation, which I shall first direct to all in general, and then more particularly,

1. To such who are in health.
2. To such who have been sick, but are recovered.
3. I shall direct to some duties to be practised in time of sickness.

I begin with the first; wherein I shall exhort all to these six duties, grounded on this Doctrine.

1. Live in the knowledge and sense of this truth, that the health and lives of all men are at the will and command of Jesus Christ.

1. See your own health and lives at the command of Christ; acknowledge with David, Psal. 31. 15. *My times are in thy hands.* Consider that of the Apostle, *Jam. 4. 13, 14. Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a City, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and presently vanisheth away.* Observe, *Go to, ye that say, To day, or to morrow.* Why, a day is but a little while, and it is but a short time till to morrow: Well, but time hath a teeming womb, and *you know not what a day may bring forth.* We often see one day working strange changes and alterations with men: a day may bring you into eternity, and put an eternal period to all your designs; and it is most certain, that *you know not what shall be on the morrow:* thou

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I shall be sick or dead to morrow; thou
 mayest be in heaven or hell to morrow: oh,
 but sure there is no such danger! yes that
 there is; and therefore it is added, *What is*
your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth
a little while, and presently vanisheth away.
 As a vapour fills the air, and makes a shew
 a little while, and then presently vanisheth
 away: So man appears a little while in his
 family, in the Field, Market, or Congrega-
 tion, but presently vanisheth out of sight.
 How would the serious thoughts of this
 make men hasten to repent, if they did know
 that there is very great danger, that unbel-
 lief and impenitency may bring them to hell
 before to morrow: If so, surely they
 would not venture one hour out of Jesus
 Christ, for as many mountains of gold, as
 there are sands upon the Sea-shore; yet for
 want of this, poor souls are still deferring
 their repentance till to morrow, until at last
 death seiseth upon them, and leaves them
 never a morrow to repent in. So, how vain
 would the world appear to them, if they
 did consider that they could not say, they
 should enjoy their riches, and pleasures, and
 preferments till to morrow! Consider thus
 with thy self, I have provided meat, but
 I may be in Eternity before I eat it; I have

bought me good cloaths, but I may be put in a winding-sheet before I wear them; I have sowed great fields, but I may be in hell before I reap them: Look on all the world about thee, and tell thy soul, This is but a poor portion, when thou mayst look all in a breath.

2. See thy Friends and Relations in the hands of Jesus Christ. Beloved, herein appears the great difference betwixt our worldly and heavenly enjoyments: As for our heavenly enjoyments, we are best when we are most fit to enjoy them; but as for our worldly comforts, we are best when we are most fit to loose them: as thus, it is our holiness and happiness, to be fit to abide for ever with God and Christ in heaven; but we are most holy and spiritual, when we are in a readiness to part with Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, &c. Now what poor comforts are these, when a man is in the best frame, when he can be content to be without them?

3. See the great ones of the world in the hands of Jesus Christ: Oh what a sight is this, to look upon all the Kings, and Nobles and Gallants of the world, in their *very fall* into Eternity? Sirs, as you see them catching at the Crowns, and Honours, and E

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states of the world, so see diseases and death catching at them : We have this passage, *Psal. 49. 12.--20. Man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beasts that perish*; that is, say some, like beasts that die of the Murrain, which are thrown away for stinking Carrion, which is good for nothing. Did we consider this, we should not make men our trust and confidence. See *Jer. 17. 5.* What a cursed sin is this, for a man that hath the Immortal God to be his trust, to rest on a lump of flesh, that cannot so much as keep himself from being sick, or dead, or damned for one day? *Psal. 146. 3, 4. Put not your trust in Princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.* Observe, the Psalmist pleads against putting our trust in the Princes and great ones of the world, because they are dying men, and in the day of death their thoughts perish. Many great men have great thoughts of honours and preferments, and perhaps thoughts of doing much mischief to Gods Church and people; but death comes, and in that very day their thoughts perish. In *Esth. 6.* we read, that *Hamans* thoughts were full of this project, to have himself honoured, and

Mordecai hanged, *vers.* 4, 6. But in one night God turned the scales, by a Divine touch upon the Kings heart; and so *Mordecai* is brought to the honour, and *Haman* to the gallows. Oh what became of the great Courtiers thoughts, when instead of the honour which he expected, he had the halter which he deserved! And thus we finde that God hath gracious thoughts of love and mercy to his people; and the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. But men have thoughts of setting up themselves, and throwing down the Church of God; but they fade in their ways, and their thoughts perish.

Psa. 33. 11.

Lastly, See your enemies in the hands of Christ: What are they all, when they may be sick, or dead, or damned before they can do thee any hurt! *Isa.* 51. 12 *I, even I am he that comforteth thee: Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?* We may learn here, that a Christians fear of man, proceeds from his ignorance of three things.

1. Of God: therefore, saith God, *I, even I am he that comforteth thee.* Sirs, if there be more power, and goodness, and wisdom

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in him that comforts us, then there is strength, and subtilty, and malice in them that trouble us, what need we be afraid? do but believe who comforts thee, and thou needst not fear or care who troubles thee; for God can take away the troubles of man, but man cannot take away the comforts of God.

2. Of themselves: Therefore saith God, *Who art thou?* What thou who art my childe, and hast me thy father to comfort thee, and yet wilt thou be afraid of a man! Oh what a poor-spirited creature art thou, to be afraid of a man!

3. Of the vanity of man. Therefore saith God, He is a man, and can do no more then a man: and he is a man that shall dye and wither as the grass. Christians, God, and Sicknes, and Death, and Hell are nearer your enemies then they are to you; and I tell you, do but believe Gods threatnings against them, and you will see no reason to fear their threatnings against you.

Secondly, live in a holy awe and fear of Jesus Christ, *Psal. 33. 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him:* A man that is a tenant at will can tell you, he is afraid of

of offending his Landlord : for, saith he, I live under him, I am at his mercie, he can keep me in, and turn me out of my living when he will. Beloved, if we know the power of Christ, as well as we do the power of a Landlord ; and were as much afraid of hell, as we are of loosing our livings, the same reason would prevail with us to be afraid of offending him ; for we live at his mercie, and life and death is at his Will : let me therefore warn you, as God did the Israelites, speaking to them of Jesus Christ, *Exod. 23. 21. Beware of him, and obey his voice ; provoke him not, for (if you continue in your sins) he will not pardon your transgressions : for my Name is in him.* Upon this ground we are required to fear him, *Psal. 2. 9, 10, 11. He will break his enemies with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potters vessel :* Therefore it is made the wisdom of Kings and Judges of the earth, *to serve the Lord with fear.* It is very observable, that as Gods Attributes give being and life to a Christians graces ; so a Christians Graces bring glory to Gods Attributes : as for example, the Power and Truth of God causeth Faith, and the Goodness of God causeth Love, and the Greatness of God causeth Fear in the hearts of

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the godly : So God hath a peculiar name of praise and glory from the graces of his people ; because of their faith and hope in him, he is called the trust, and confidence, and hope of his people ; and because of their delight in him, he is called the song and joy of his people ; and because of their awe and dread of him, he is called the fear of his people, *the fear of Isaac*, Gen. 31. 42. See *Isa. 8. 13. Sanctifie the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* We have a special instance of this in *Job*, cap. 31. in which Chapter *Job* by many solemn protestations and serious imprecations asserts his innocencie in several duties, as in chastity, equity to his servants, charity to the poor, &c. Now he clears himself, that the reason of his integrity in these things, was not because he was afraid of ever a man alive. Hence, saith he, *vers. 34. Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrifie me ?* No, no, he had a great awe upon his heart, *vers. 23. For destruction from God was terror to me, and by reason of his greatness I could not endure.* How contrary to this is the secure temper of many, who rage in malice against God and godliness, and fill the land that bears them with lyes, oaths, drunkenness, whoredoms,

whoredoms, injustice, Sabbath-breaking, contempt of Ordinances, &c. yet they make no more of God and his Judgements, then the very stones or dirt under their feet. But oh what work will diseases and death make among these secure and senseless Atheists thortly! methinks I hear the wrath of God roaring against them; and *the Lyon hath roared, who will not fear?* Amos 3.8. Be perswaded then to stand in awe of God; for which purpose lay up that Scripture, Eccles. 8. 12, 13. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him. But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days which are as a shadow, because he feareth not before God.*

3. Labour to make your peace with God: you see what he can do against you; he can disease, or kill, or damn you when he will; therefore it's your great wisdom and safety to have this God on your side, and to be at peace with him. The Scripture perswades to this duty with this argument, Isa. 27. 4, 5. *Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battel? I wou'd go through them, I would burn them together*

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gether : meaning, if my enemies, who are but as briars and thorns before me, who am a consuming fire, will fight it out against me, I will burn them up quickly, I will have them in hell presently : but, saith he, *vers. 5. If they will (by sincere faith and prayer) take hold on my strength, and make peace with me, they shall make peace with me.* Now to prevail with you herein, consider what this peace with God is; it's that blessed State, whereby God in Christ is for the good, and happiness, and eternal salvation of Believers; and whereby they are wholly turned and set for the service and glory of God : So that in this case, a man may improve his knowledge and faith by all the advantages both from Scriptures and Creatures, and get his soul filled with the highest thoughts of the infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness of God; and then boldly say, This is my infinitely great and good Father, and all his glorious power, and wisdom, and love is on my side: then he may look into the world, and see all things working busily about him; and then conclude, that this is the greatest work upon the wheels to bring happiness and salvation to me, and to that body of which I am a member. And then on the other hand
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he may look in himself, and see all the powers of his body and soul united in this great designe to please, and praise, and enjoy God. So that by these things you may learn what it is to be at peace with God: whereby you may also see what is the enmity betwixt God and a sinner; it is that whereby a sinner is against God, so as to be fearfully bent to hate, and deny, and despise him; and God is against the sinner, so as to blast, and curse, and damn him: so that this is thy case, sinner, if thou art not at peace with God, all manner of diseases, and all kindes of deaths and dangers, yea, and all the curses of the Bible are against thee, because the God of all these is against thee. I would therefore seriously perswade you to come to agreement with God; which that you may do, let me tell you, that I am this day sent as an Embassador of peace from the Lord of life and death, who *hath committed to me the word of reconciliation*: So that I have authority from him to offer most blessed conditions of peace, *viz.* if you will this day sincerely turn from sin to God, and truly receive Jesus Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, you shall have the great God to be your Father, his onely begotten Son, the true God, to be your Husband and

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Saviour, the infinite and blessed Spirit to be your Comforter ; you shall have grace and peace to abide with you here, and an everlasting Kingdom of glory to possess and enjoy hereafter. Sirs, are not these blessed and honourable terms ? Well, where lyes the difference ? *Answer.* In nothing but sin : Now what a fearful case is this , that after God the Father hath sent his onely begotten Son, and after he hath dyed the most shameful, painful, and accursed death of the Cross, and after so many hundred Sermons and offers of peace ; Wilt thou now break with God for a base lust ? canst thou indure hereafter to lye among the Devils and damned in everlasting burnings ; and to see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of God ; and hear thy own conscience upbraiding thee to all eternity, that thou hast lost heaven, and dost lye in hell for loving thy cups, oaths, whores, or the dust of the earth, better then Jesus Christ ? O Sirs, repent and believe quickly ; you have more need to do it, then either to eat, drink or sleep : for ought you know, you may be in hell before such another offer be made. I am sure there are millions of diseases and deaths waiting at your doors to break up the treaty : I shall therefore conclude this in
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the words of Eliphaz to Job, cap. 22. 21, 22, 23. *Aquaint now thy self with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee.*

Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thy heart.

If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy Tabernacles.

Fourthly, prize and improve godly Ministers and people, whilst you have them, seeing it appears by this Doctrine, that you know not how soon they may be sent for to heaven, where I am sure they will be better respected. Now the greatest honour that you can shew to godly Ministers, is, to be

Jam. 1. 22. doers of the Word, which they are Preachers of. Ministers are more honoured by the conversion, though of the poorest servants, then by the highest commendations, which the most able and learned Doctors are able to express: for this is their greatest glory, to be instruments of Gods glory in the salvation of poor souls; for thereby the Word of God is glorified, 2 Thes. 3. 1. By the applause of men, Ministers may be cryed up for persons of excellent gifts and parts; but this is their greatest glory, when by the salvation of souls, the excellencie of the power

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appears to Beloved, t knows not Christians, lencie of C and Heave make them us not, beca But whate who can riches, and be dead a Ministers their age: and Coun Families, which lo 10. 11. well of li cessary p wholefor where it a Well c qua vitæ ing Chr grace, a mouth 15. 4. A a Meta

appears to be of God, and not of men. But Beloved, the ignorant unbelieving world knows not the worth of godly Ministers or Christians, because they see not the excellencie of God, and Christ, and Holiness, and Heaven, which are the causes which make them so precious : *The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not, 1 Joh. 3. 1.* But whatever the men of the world think, who can prize nothing but honours, and riches, and pleasures, to which they should be dead and crucified ; I tell you, godly Ministers and Christians are the blessings of their age ; and those are the best Kingdoms, and Countries, and Towns, and Parishes, and Families, which have most of them, and which love them best. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 10. 11. The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life.* I need not tell you what a necessary publick mercy, a well of good and wholesome water is to the Town or Family where it springs : Now a righteous man is a Well of Life ; he is a spring of spiritual *Aqua vita* : Many a poor sinner, or sad swooning Christian, receives the spiritual life of grace, and strength, and comfort from the mouth of a godly Minister or Christian, *Prov. 15. 4. A wholesome tongue is a tree of life* : It's a Metaphor taken from the Tree of Life in

Paradise, which was Gods Ordinance to preserve man alive, had he continued in innocencie. Thus a godly man is a tree of life in this evil world ; he turns a Family into a Paradise where he grows, and is prized : so that many a man who was dead in sin, and many a tainting childe of God, is quickned and revived by feeding on the fruit of *his wholesome tongue*.

Now my Brethren, the serious consideration that these blessings are by sickness and death ready to be taken from us, should cause us to esteem and improve their spiritual and savoury company. How did *Elisha* cleave to *Elijah*, when he knew he was presently to be taken from him ! and therefore we finde, that three times *Elijah* (to try *Elisha* his constancie) seemed to shake him off : but *Elisha* every time answers most solemnly, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee*, 2 Kin. 2. 2, 3, 6. and if you read the story, you will finde that it proved well for *Elisha*, that he was so wise and careful to improve that precious opportunity. See *Acts* 20. 25. where *Paul* useth this Argument to press his following exhortation : *And now behold, I know that you all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face*

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no more. Oh people, honour your Ministers; children, be instructed by your Parents whilst you have them; for shortly you must see their faces no more. Christians, *exhort one another daily, whilst it is called to day*: Heb. 3.13 For yet a little while, and you shall see one anothers faces no more. We finde that Saint *Paul* having exhorted *Timothy* to those great and necessary duties mentioned 2 *Tim.* 4.1,2,5. he presseth all with this melting motive, *vers.* 6. *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*: as if he had said, My dear son *Timothy*, I am not like to counsel and instruct thee long; therefore hearken to the counsel of thy dying father *Paul*: *Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, &c.* Sirs, look upon your Ministers as dying Ministers, and your Friends as dying Friends; and labour to draw from these wells of life whilst they live; for you little know what a loss you will have of them when they dye.

Fifthly, believe and improve those precious Promises which God hath made for the preservation of your health and lives; and in the use of means, live by faith and prayer upon those gracious promises. See *Prov.* 3.1,2,7,8. *My son, forget not my law,*

but let thy heart keep my commandments. For length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add unto thee, vers. 7, 8. Fear the Lord, and depart from evil: It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. See also Prov. 4. 20, 21, 22. Job 33. 25. His flesh shall be fresher then a childes, he shall return to the days of his youth. Hence we often see, that when a mans body is withered by sickness, and baked like a pot-herd, he is restored by the blessing of God to such a good constitution and temper, that his body becomes fresh like the flesh of a childe: This is elegantly expressed by David, Psal. 103. 5. *Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the Eagles.* Some say that the Eagles at every ten years end cast off their old Feathers, and are quickly cloathed again with new, as if they began to be young again, and so live till they be an hundred years old.

Some also write of this property in the Eagles, that when by reason of old age, they have the upper part of their Bills bending down so far below the lower, that they are scarce able to feed, and so languish with hunger, that then they break their beaks upon a rock, whereby being
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able to feed, they grow to their former strength; to which the translation in the singing *Psalms* seems to allude:

*Like as the Eagle casts her bill,
Whereby her age renew' th.*

Whether these, and many other such relations of the wonderful properties of the Eagles be true, is uncertain; yet it's generally received, that they are Birds long-lived, and for many years continue so healthful, that they seem to grow young again. And thus God often bleffeth men with health, and strength, and long life, that their strength is renewed like the Eagles: and although that which we read of *Moses* was extraordinary, that when he was an hundred and twenty years old, *his eye was not dim, nor* Deut. 34. *his natural force abated*; yet we often see 7. many live to a great age, with their health, and strength, and pass through Gods mercie continued youthful and fresh to them. Now Sirs, lay up these promises in your hearts, and improve them by faith and prayer; so they may be the better to you then the wholesomest dyet, or best physick in the world.

Lastly, use the means of health and life

so, as that the God of life may bless you in the use of them: for this purpose, make conscience of these four things.

First, Of your food: It is God that gives a blessing to this, *Exod. 23. 25. He shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee.* Therefore pulse and water with Gods blessing, made those conscientious Saints look and like better then others that were fed with royal dainties, *Dan. 1. 15.* Take then your food, as it were, out of the hands of God, *who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,* *Psal. 145. 16.* and eat, and drink, as those that see a presence of God at your table: *Deut. 12. 7. Ye shall eat before the Lord your God: eat as those that therein seek to please and honour God,* *Rom. 14. 6. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, and giveth God thanks.* I know these Scriptures intend particular occasions of eating; yet they hold out upon the same reason our duty to eat and drink so, as to do the will of God, and to bring glory to him, according to that, *1 Cor. 10. 31. Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God:* as God turns all to a Christians good, so it's the admirable property of grace to turn all to Gods glory:

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ry: A gracious heart can feed upon the goodness of God in, and bring glory to God out of every morsel of meat that comes into his mouth. *Tertullian* gives a very savoury relation of the Feasts of the primitive Christians: *Before* (saith he) *they sit down to taste their meat, they first taste of prayer to God; they eat so much as hunger requires, and drink no more then is profitable for chaste and sober persons; they are so filled, as thereby fitted to worship God in the night; they discourse at meat, as those that know that God hears them: and as they began, so they conclude the meal with prayer; and so they depart, not as if they fed onely upon meat, but also upon discipline and instruction.* I refer the learned Reader to his own words, *Apolo- log. cap. 39.* here is a most gracious example, worthy of the imitation of all Christians.

Secondly, make Conscience of your apparel; let it be such as becomes a holy, chaste, humble member of Christ, and not a proud, vain, wanton limb of the Devil; let your garments be both wholesome and comely; neither so immodest as to dishonour the Gospel of Christ, nor sordid as to disgrace the Body of a Christian.

Thirdly, make Conscience of lawful and

seasonable recreations : These are healthful for our bodies, and when used in the fear, and according to the Will of God, do very much fit us for the most inward communion with him. What *Solomon* saith of one kinde of labour, is true of others, that it is a weakness and *weariness to the flesh*, Eccles. 12. 12. For as it weakens a bow to keep it always bent, and mars the strings of an instrument to keep them always stretcht; so it weakens the body to keep it too long bent to one imployment; therefore it is Gods will that it should be remitted to its harmless, inoffensive, and honest recreations.

Lastly, make Conscience of the duties of your relations, so that you may refresh, and revive, and not disease and destroy one another; our health and life doth much depend under God upon our relations.

You therefore that are parents, do not spend your childrens bread in whoredom, drunkenness, idleness and revenge: many parents finde their lusts more chargeable then their children: It is very sad that children may cry out, We might have had better education, better trades, better portions, better health, had not our merciless parents

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Parents loved their sins better then their children.

You that are children, make not your parents lives miserable, who have been a means of life to you: be not such foolish children, as to be *the heaviness* of your parents, *Prov. 10. 1.*

Husbands, *Nourish and cherish your own flesh*, *Eph. 5. 29.* Make not provision for your lusts, with that which should make provision for your wives.

Wives, do your Husbands *good*, and *not evil, all the daies of your lives*, *Prov. 31. 12.* labour to be their Comfort, and Crown, and not *as rottenness in their bones.* *Prov. 12. 4.*

So much for the Exhortation to all in general.

2. Exhortation directed to people as they enjoy their health.

The duty which I shall exhort unto, is to prepare for sickness and death. In this Exhortation I shall use this method.

1. I shall shew what this work of preparation is.

2. I shall press this duty on several sorts of persons.

3. Urge it with some Motives.

Lastly, I shall give several Directions to direct

direct us how to be prepared for sickness and death.

For the first.

This work of preparation is that whereby every sound believer is by the Spirit of Jesus Christ settled in such a blessed state and frame, that he is fitted for all that Christ shall do to him by sickness and death.

In this description observe three things.

1. The principal efficient cause which makes this great preparation in us, viz. the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Hence Christ is called, *The Author and finisher of our faith*, Heb. 12. 12. Where Jesus Christ begins a work of grace and salvation in a soul, he never leaves it till he hath finished it, and made it up for heaven: therefore, saith the Apostle, Phil. 1. 6. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, or finish it: till the day of Jesus Christ*; that is, till the day of death, and of judgment: so that this is the great work of Jesus Christ in every true believer, to fit him, and make him ready for sickness, and death, and the day of judgment.

2. Here is the subject of this work, or the person prepared, viz. every true believer, who is a vessel of mercy prepared for glory.

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3. Here is that wherein the nature of this work of preparation consists, viz. in three things.

1. He must be settled in the state of grace and salvation; that is, he must have a Scripture-right to God, as he is the God of salvation by Jesus Christ, and so a right to heaven, and to all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

2. He must be wrought into a gracious frame, whereby he is bent to yield up himself in subjection and obedience to the will of God, in sickness, and in death.

Lastly, Here is that which he must be prepared for, viz. all that God shall do to him by sickness and death: If God fill him with pain and misery, he hath his graces of faith, love, patience, humility, and meekness, to enable him to lie quietly, and obediently, and chearfully under the power and will of his heavenly Father. If God call him by sickness into Eternity, he is with Saint Paul, ready to be offered; and is made fit by grace, to receive and enjoy the glory of heaven. This gracious frame of heart is fully express'd, Rom. 14. 8. *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord;* that

Christs Power over

that is, we live to this end, to please, and do the will, and to seek the glory of the Lord, and we are ready to die to the will and glory of the Lord.

So much for the Explication of this work of preparation.

Secondly, I shall press this Exhortation upon these seven sorts of persons.

1. I shall exhort little children (so far as they are capable to know and practise this duty) to prepare for sickness and death. Now because this application may seem strange, consider, that God himself thinks it not below him to be a Teacher of young children, *Psalms 148. 12, 13. Both young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the name of the Lord.* And all parents are commanded to teach their children to know and do his will, *Deut. 6. 6, 7. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently; (or what and sharpen them) upon thy children.* So *Prov. 22. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* Observe, there is a way for young children to go to heaven, and it is that wherein they should be found when they are old; and all parents are bound

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bound to set them in that way: and indeed; children are sooner capable than most conceive, to know something of God, and Christ, and Heaven, and Hell. Timothy knew the Scriptures, *and Bishop, from a sucking childe*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And this appears by the timely fruits of the Spirit that sometimes drop from their pretty sanctified mouths.

And certainly baptized children being Christs Disciples, and admitted into his School, the Church, have a right to be taught in the way to salvation; and Christ is a Prophet to them, and his Ministers are Ministers to them, as well as to others: And really, Ministers have often more comfort from catechized Boys and Girls, than from many old ignorant Atheists, who are worse than children in the understanding of the Scriptures. And lastly, it makes much for Gods glory, to have his Name praised by the mouths of little children, Psal. 8. 2. *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thy enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and avenger.* Observe, God hath ordained that his praise in the mouths of little children, shall be a strong and powerful means to stop the mouths of malicious subtil

Christ's Power over

subtil Atheists, to still the enemy and avenger. So we read, *Matth. 21. 16. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.* The praises that come to God by the blessed Angels, and all the Saints in heaven and earth, is perfected and made up by the praises of these young Saints. Now considering these things, and seeing sickness and death fetch away so many young children into Eternity, I have chosen to direct one brief Exhortation to the young Boys and Girls among us.

Oh come therefore, you sweet and pretty children, *and I will teach you the fear of the Lord*: be you prepared for sickness and death. Hearn, sweet Children, you were born children of the Devil, and you must be born again if ever you will be the children of God.

Good children, know and love the God that made you, and Jesus Christ who died for you, to redeem and save you.

You can be afraid of the Rod, and a Bug-bear; be afraid of sin and hell.

Perhaps you have godly parents, who instruct and catechize you in the knowledge of God: Why, good children, *bear the instruction of your fathers, and forsake not the law*

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law of your mothers. God doth not love you as his children, because you are pretty or witty children, or because you are the children of rich parents; but if you will love and fear the Lord, then *you shall be* Psal. 22.
accounted to the Lord for a generation. 30.

Good children, look on the graves in the Church-yards, and you shall see many who were no elder nor taller then you, dead and buried before you: as young as you are sick, and as young as you are dead, and as young as you are in heaven and hell; therefore be Gods children whilst you are young, lest you be sick, and dead, and damned before you be old.

2. Exhort parents to do their duty in endeavouring to prepare their children for sickness and death, *Ephes. 6. 4.* *ἐκτρέφετε*, feed or nourish your children in the fear of the Lord. Beasts can take care to save their young ones lives; but men, and women, and Christians should be careful to save their childrens souls: when thy children dye, if thou hast neglected their salvation, it must (if thy conscience be ever awakened) cause stinging reflections in thy soul. There is a story of a father, who consented that his daughter should commit whoredom; which she did, and soon after dyed: whereupon the

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the poor guilty father cryes out, *I have damned my daughters soul, I have damned my daughters soul.* Sirs, do not teach your children to lye, swear, to be drunk or covetous, to scoff at Gods children or holiness, lest one day you have cause to cry out when it is too late, *We have damned our childrens souls.* When your hearts are affected to see your children about you, then see diseases and death at your doors, ready to make your children orphans, or you childless; and consider withal, how sad it is, that such pretty sweet children should be for ever burned in hell. Beloved, I would not have you worse then Infidels, in not providing for your childrens bodies; and yet I would have you better then Devils, in providing for their poor souls: It is a pleasant sight to see parents live, as if they were going with all their children to heaven: It is comely to see parents sitting in their house, and their children about them; or to see them sitting in a Congregation, and their children about them: but how much more glorious will it be, to see them sitting in heaven, and their children about them! though the relation will end, yet the comfort of being a means to bring them thither will abide for

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ever. Parents, if you cannot make your children heirs of houses and lands, labour to make them heirs of heaven; do not only teach your children how to live, but also teach them how to dye: thou art troubled sometimes to think, Alas, how will my poor children live! I tell thee thou hast more need to think, How will my poor children dye! for there are few so poor, but they can make some shift to live; but there are millions so miserable, that they know not how to dye.

3. Exhortation to young men. *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men*, Prov. 8. 4. make it your care to prepare for sickness and death. Solomon having taught, that *childhood and youth is vanity*, Eccles. 11. 10. he infers this Exhortation to young men, *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator in the daies of thy youth*. It is necessary for all young people to live, as those that know, *that God will bring them to judgment*, Eccles. 11. 9. Consider, you are never prepared for sickness and death, till you are prepared for judgement. Oh young men and women, look upon yourselves as going to judgment: Hark, do not you hear the great shout that calls you all to make your appearance before the

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judgment-seat of Christ. Sirs, be nothing now, but what you would appear to be at that great day: Wouldst thou be judged as a Drunkard, or Swearer, or Whoremonger, or Worldling, or as an enemy to godly Ministers and Christians at the day of judgment? If not, then be not such a one now; do not think your selves too young to enter into a serious way of godliness: For what if sickness and death will not stay till you are old? Thou art not too young to be sick, or to die: Do not then think that thou art too young to go to heaven, lest God think thee old enough to go to hell.

4. Exhortation to old men to prepare for sickness and death: The daies which Eccl. 12. 1. *Solomon calls evil daies*, are already come upon you. Methinks I may allude to that of our Saviour, Joh. 4. 35. *Look on the fields, for they are white already unto Harvest.* When I look on old people, I see a white crop of gray hairs, which speaks them to be ripe for the sickle of death. Sirs, diseases and death have done a great deal of their work upon you already; they have worn away your colour, beauty and strength: yet how sad is it to see an old man more unfit to die, then a very childe that begins to live!

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He is old and ignorant , old and covetous, old and malicious, old and cruel, old, and yet a drunkard. Oh poor man , what hast thou been doing all thy daies ? Hast thou had fifty , threescore , almost fourscore years , to prepare for sickness and death, and to lay up treasures in heaven ; and hast thou done nothing else, but been heaping up wrath in hell ! Hearn , old Father (for I must needs honour thy hoary head) the sick-bed, death, the grave call for thee : Oh then repent, and believe presently ; let not the Devil , who long ago perswaded thee thou wast too young , now perswade thee thou art too old ; for as old as thou art, yet it is better for thee to go to heaven a young Babe of Christ , then to go to hell an old slave of the Devil.

5. Exhortation to rich and great men of the world to prepare for sickness and death. Sirs, there are messengers at your doors to fetch you , where mountains of gold are worth nothing ; your riches cannot guard you against sickness and death : God can as easily turn a Bed of Down into a Bed of Languishing, as a Bed of Straw ; and a disease cares no more for the richest Velvet, then the poorest Sheep skin ; and a sickness can as easily catch thee in a Coach , as in a

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Cart ; and death enters into the stateliest Castle, as soon as the poorest cottage. Read your case , *Jam. 1. 10, 11. As the flower of the grass he shall pass away : For the Sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat , but it withereth the grass , and the flower thereof falleth , and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth ; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.* Oh tell thy friends, lands, silver and gold , that thou art going into Eternity, and art presently to stand before the Judge of Quick and Dead , and see what help they can afford thee : Thou wilt certainly finde *Solomons* words true , *Prov. 11. 4. Richer profit not in the day of wrath.*

Beloved , If we would know whether a man be happy or miserable , we must not look upon him as he appears in his honours and riches, &c. but follow him to his death, and the day of judgment ; see how he speeds there, and how he comes off then, for then the man comes to his proof : and we shall see , that all the riches of the world yield no profit in those great daies, but then the highest carnal Monarch shall be no more respected by the Judge of all the world, then the ugliest Devil of Hell ; when a poor godly servant, or day-labourer, shall be crowned with incorruptible glory.

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before his face. Oh therefore you rich men, look among all your jewels and treasures, whether you have a God, and Christ, and grace for your poor souls ; these only are the provision which will maintain you against the terrors of death, and the dread of judgment.

6. Exhortation to poor men to prepare for sickness and death. We think them poor who have nothing to live on in this world ; but they are poor , who have nothing to live on in the other world. Poor people ! you cannot come at the silver, and gold, and riches of this world, when you will ; but you have as much freedom to the riches of the other world, as the mightiest Prince upon earth. Thou mayst call God Father, and ask what thou wilt, and live upon the everlasting Kingdom of heaven as thy own : and therefore you that are poor and godly, let your riches of the other world comfort you against the poverty of this : Look on thy cold Cottage, and then look on thy house not made with hands : Look on thy poor leathern cloaths, and then look how thou shalt be clothed when thou appearest with Christ in glory : Look on thy brown bread, and courie fare, and then remember the entertainment which Angels

and Saints have in heaven. Oh poor people! though you know not how to be maintained whilst you live, yet get saving grace, and you will be rich enough to go to heaven when you die.

The last Exhortation shall be to such, who, in some respects, seem nearer death than other persons. I shall instance only in three sorts of people, to whom I shall direct this Exhortation to prepare for sickness and death.

First, Such whose callings and employments do expose their lives to daily and great dangers; as Water-men, Colliers, Carpenters, Masons, &c. These men, by a leak in a Boat or Ship, a fall of a little earth, a slip of a foot, may be turned to heaven or hell every day: Yet we often see, that many who live in the greatest dangers, live in the greatest sins. My earnest advice to you is, to prepare for death, that though you stand in dangerous places, yet you may stand upon sure ground for the salvation of your souls. Sirs, for ought I know, you may get heaven with less danger than you get your livings: Remember what precious souls you have, and that every time you venture your lives, you venture your souls too: Labour by sound re-

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penitance to forsake your sins, and to turn to God. Do not swear, and lye, and be drunk, and deceive others: Do not prophane the Lords daies, if you expect that God should preserve you on working daies; labour by a sound faith to rest on Christ to save your guilty souls; see your nearness unto Eternity; be often looking from the places where you are, into heaven and hell, and see what a little there is betwixt you and them; and seriously consider, if now you should fall into Eternity, in which of those two places would be your portion: Get such a saving knowledge of God, that you may comfortably commit the keeping of your lives unto him, and solemnly worship God in your Closets and Families, and live in the fear of God, and in peace with him, and use your callings to his glory, that he may preserve you in your ways; or however, that if you *do die in your callings*, you may not *die in your sins*.

Secondly, Such, who though they have ordinarily present ease and health, yet they are subject to dangerous and sudden pains, and fearful distempers, as Convulsions, Falling-Sickness, Stone, &c. you have need, in regard of these, to be always prepared for sickness and death: you would not be

without what remedies you can get, when your distempers come: Oh do not be without God, and Christ, and Grace, if death should come in them. Whatever you are doing, consider, Now my distempers may surprize me; therefore if they take you in bed, at meat, at work, let them not take you in your sins: in all likelihood, these fits will shorten your daies; therefore let them hasten your repentance: these distempers will fill you with torturing pains, or for present deprive you of your reason, parts, senses, &c. so that then will be a very unfit time to prepare for death; therefore improve your times of health and ease, as merciful opportunities, that when your diseases or death finde you, they may not finde you unprovided. Sirs, always remember, that you carry death in your bodies; therefore be sure to carry grace in your souls.

Lastly, Women that are with childe, have special reason to be prepared for sickness and death: God hath inseparably fixt this punishment upon this Sex, that *in sorrow they shall bring forth children*, Gen. 3. 16. And our Saviour tells us, *Joh. 16. 21. A woman when she is in travel, hath sorrow: And experience witnesseth the grievous*

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pangs and pains of all, and the sad deaths of very many in this condition: so that thou must certainly within a few weeks be grievously diseased, and thou mayst probably dye: do not then venture into such dangers in a Christless state. Poor woman! perhaps thou hast bred that life which will be thy own death: therefore labour to finde that Christ is as sure formed in thy heart, as the babe is formed in thy womb; and before that sad and dangerous hour of the birth of thy childe come, examine thoroughly whether *the new birth* be past in thy soul: I would not have thee oppress thy heart with the dismal forethoughts and distracting fears of that time: for to be sure, *sufficient to that day will be the evil thereof*; but I would have thee so prepared, that the short pangs of childe-bearing may not end in the everlasting pangs and torments of hell; and that thou mayst be a new creature, and found in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that if thou shouldst no longer live with thy Husband, nor enjoy the fruit of thy womb upon earth, thou mayst live with Christ, and enjoy the fruit of his righteousness in heaven for ever. I shall conclude this with that suitable Scripture, *1 Tim. 2.15. Not-with-*

withstanding she shall be saved in childe-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety: lest poor women should be swallowed up with the sad thoughts of the sin mentioned in the former verse, where it's said that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression: for which sin, disgrace and punishment is fixt to the Sex: these words are added for their comfort, to shew that, notwithstanding that sin and the punishment thereof, yet they shall be saved in childe-bearing, if they continue in faith, and charity, and holiness with sobriety. Poor woman! methinks I see thee walking with two souls over eternity, and both full of sin; Oh therefore hasten to make thy peace with that God whose pow-

er alone must take the childe out of the mothers bowels; that so thou mayst comfortably depend and call upon him to save both your lives, but however to save your poor souls.

I come now to urge this duty with these seven Motives.

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prepare for the day of judgement, *Matth.* 24. 42. *Mar.* 13. 33, 35. Now it's a certain rule, that all those Scriptures which command us to prepare for the day of judgement, do imply our duty to be prepared for sickness and death, which are the fore-runners of that day; and the same preparation which is made for the one, will serve for the other. Now, my Brethren, this is a sufficient reason to move you to this duty: for it's the will of God which makes it our duty, and binds us to it, and must be the reason to us why we do it, or we can never be prepared aright. Beloved, God would *have us to be saved*, *1 Tim.* 2. 4. to reign with him in heaven; and therefore to be always ready against the time that he sends for us thither.

Mot. 2. It's a signe of a very wise man to be prepared for sickness and death, *Prov.* 22. 3. *A prudent man fore-seeth the evil, and bideth himself.* A wise godly man sees sickness, and death, and the day of judgement before him: he knows he must go through all these, and therefore he takes care to provide so as to be safe and happy in those great dangers. Beloved, it's the greatest wisdom in the world, to be *wise to salva-* *2 Tim.* 3. *tion*: It's better miscarry in a thousand businesses

nesses then in the business of Salvation: Now he that is wise to salvation, prepares against all the dangers that he must be saved from; and the greatest danger is at death, when a man must go through that door where so many millions fall into hell: what a wise man then is he who is prepared so, as that door to him is the door of heaven! Many that get estates and preferments in the world, are much admired for their wisdom; and yet when death comes, they must be damned for their folly!

Matth. 25. Remember the Parable of the *ten Virgins*, five whereof were wise, and five were foolish: Now why were those five called wise? the reason was, because when that great cry was made at midnight, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh*, they were prepared: and why were the other five foolish? because they were unprepared for that great time. Beloved, when the great God our Saviour shall come out of heaven with his *mighty Angels*, and his glorious Saints, and shall shew his blessed face in the clouds, and sound a trumpet that will call all the quick and dead before him in the *twinkling of an eye*; certainly they will prove the wisest persons, that are so prepared as to stand, and triumph, and lift up their heads with joy

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in that great appearance. Ah Sirs, when *Come ye blessed, and Go ye cursed*, hath distinguished and parted the world, it will then be known, who are wise men, and who are fools.

Mot. 3. Because it's altogether uncertain when sickness and death will come, the Scripture useth this argument, *Mar. 13. 33. Watch and pray: for ye know not when your time is.* Solomon elegantly sets forth the uncertainty of our time, *Eccles. 9. 12. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.* As the fishes are sporting in the water, and are presently masht in the net; and as the birds are hopping in the chaff, and are presently caught in the snare; so poor man is suddenly and unexpectedly surprised in the snares of death. Sometimes a man is fast asleep, and sickness awakens him: sometimes he is feeding at the table, and death comes between the cup and the lip: sometimes he is riding a journey, and death throws him into eternity: and sometimes he is making a purchase, and death comes and breaks the bargain: sometimes he is marrying a wife,

and

and death comes and mars the match, Sirs, sickness and death are under no rules of civility; they care not for disturbing the weightiest business in the world; if therefore we cannot say of any thing, I will do this, or I will have that, before I am sick or dead; certainly our very next work should be to prepare for sickness and death.

Mot. 4. Because thou knowest not what kinde of sickness or death may come upon thee. We read of a great death, 2 Cor. 1. 10. Sometimes death comes with great pains, and great terrors, and great temptations, which make it a great death; so that the provision of a whole age of grace will not, without the mighty support of Gods Spirit, keep thee holy and cheerful at such a time. It is said; *Job 18. 13. The first-born of death shall devour his strength.* The first-born is the chiefest and mightiest in it's kinde; and therefore the meaning is, that death shall come in the most cruel and terrible manner to devour a man: Now let before thee those that have dyed in the most fearful pains of body, and have been assaulted with the most horrid temptations, and consider, this may be thy case; however; prepare against the worst, that Sin, and

Death;

Death, and thee.

Mot. 5. Sickness and health are as he which will and joyful health; for meekness of soul for a vision of against a and prepared for sickness, nor preparation

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Death, and Devils, and men can do against thee.

Mot. 5. By thy being prepared for sickness and death, thou art also prepared for health and life; for there is none so fit to live, as he who is fit to dye; the same graces which will make thee holy, and patient, and joyful in sickness, will make thee so in health; for the same faith, love, humility, meekness and patience, which qualifie the soul for passive obedience, do also fit the soul for active obedience; as the same provision of victuals or money which is made against a siege or famine, will be useful and profitable, if such times do not happen; so that you can neither be well, nor sick, nor live, nor dye without this work of preparation.

Mot. 6. That man is in a most blessed condition, who is prepared for sickness and death; for every thing which makes him prepared, makes him blessed. I shall onely instance in two things.

1. All the happiness of the other world is his own, *1 Cor. 3. 22. Things to come are yours.* Christians, your sins, snares and troubles are almost past, but they will be all over shortly; but your joy, glory and happiness are to come: The happiness of heaven

ven is to come, and the glory of the day of judgement is to come: Now all these joys that are to come, are yours; for they are settled upon you in the Covenant of Grace, *1 Tim. 4. 8. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Now that man is fit to dye, and is in a most blessed condition, who when sickness and death comes, hath a right to go to heaven. Poor childe of God! the best of thy hopes, and comforts, and happiness, lies beyond death, and thou canst not come at them for this life; but sickness and death will put thee into possession of all, and thou art like to see a strange sight, so soon as death hath loosed thee out of this life.

2. He is by the graces of Gods Spirit fitted for heaven; he is *made meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the Saints in light, Col. 1. 12.* Beloved, grace makes a man fit to receive glory; the joys of heaven are brought and received into the soul by grace; if thou wilt be prepared for death, live now as thou hopest to live for ever in heaven; do nothing but what thou wouldst do going to heaven. Besides, by grace the heart of a Believer fastens on heaven; he *lays hold on eternal life*; he prays, hears and

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and receives Sacraments with his heart, having fast hold on heaven. How fit therefore is such a man to have sickness and death come to let him into heaven !

Last Motive. If you are not prepared for sickness and death, you will be prepared for hell. Sirs, if a godly man doth good, and a sinner doth evil, both go into eternity; the one to be a treasure in heaven, the other to be a treasure in hell. Now what a fearful condition is this, for a man to be always laying up provision against himself in hell ! We read, *Rom. 9. 22.* of *vessels of wrath fitted or made up for destruction*; if you will not be made up for heaven, you must be made up for hell : Oh believe what a fearful condition this is, to be always ready to be turned into hell; thou dost not think of this whilst the pleasures of sin and the patience of God last : But what a case wilt thou be in, when there will be nothing in thee but torments, and nothing in God towards thee but wrath ! Beloved, be convinced of the certainty of hell; thou mayst as certainly see hell by the light of Scripture, as thou mayst see men, and beasts, and earth, and trees by the light of the Sun; hell is as certain as sin and sinners; there is wrath in God as sure as there is sin in man. God's

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justice

justice is as sure as his mercie; and he hath bound himself to condemn unbelievers, as well as to save believers. See *Job. 3. ult. Mark 16. 16.*

See your nearness to hell, whilst you are unprepared for sickness and death: methinks I see that every step thou goest, thou art ready to tread in the flames. Poor soul! thou hankest over the lake of brimstone by the twin'd thred of life; when that breaks, thou art drowned and damned for ever; there is nothing appears between thee and hell, but the hand-breadth of time: Oh what a sight is this, to see a company of secure sinners drinking, and swearing, and swaggering, and ranting, and roaring within an hand-breadth of everlasting burnings! Again, consider the greatness of hell-torments; here is a depth that thou canst not fathom; who can speak of the greatness of hell-torments, when it's our duty to believe they are unspeakable? Canst thou tell how many years eternity lasts? or how much punishment sin deserves? Dost thou know how much wrath Omnipotencie can inflict? or how much torment a vessel of wrath can hold? then mayst thou measure the torments of hell, and fathom the lake of fire and brimstone. Consider but this one thing,

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viz. the greatness of God who inflicts the torments ; he is a God to whom vengeance belongs, and he were no God if he could not do that which belongs to him : consider God is great in every thing that he is ; to whom he is a father, a portion, a husband, he is a great father, a great portion, a great husband ; to whom he is an enemy, he is a great enemy : Oh how great must their misery be, who must for ever feel the weight of that hand which made heaven and earth ! Beloved, if but the ach of a tooth be so grievous, that it takes away the taste of a whole monarchy of the world while it lasts ; how inconceivably great must their torments be, who have the power that made all the world set a work to torment their bodies and souls through all eternity ! Nay, consider further, God will raise up his glory out of his enemies misery ; those are always great works which God makes to please himself, and to demonstrate his glory : when he would glorifie his power, and goodness, and wisdom, he makes a world ; when he would glorifie his grace, and love, and mercie, he gives a Christ ; and when he would glorifie his justice and holiness, he damns a sinner. O wo, wo, wo be those poor souls, out of whose torments God will raise up

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to himself an everlasting revenue of unspeakable glory! Oh then what a miserable cheated soul art thou, who wilt venture to be one hour unprepared for sickness and death, when for ought thou knowest thou mayst be in the bottom of hell before the clock strike next!

I shall now in the last place conclude this Use, by giving you ten Directions to direct you how to prepare for sickness and death.

Direct. 1. Labour by a strong and lively faith to be always receiving and resting upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Beloved, the greatest danger you are to provide against, is, that sickness and death do not bring you to hell: Now being found in Christs righteousness, you shall have thereby a safe and comfortable way and passage through these into heaven; for by reason of this, you may stand on the very gates of death, and triumph with the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 33, 34.* *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dyed, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* Now this righteousness of Christ is as truly thine by faith,

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as it is *Pauls*, or ever a *Saints* in heaven,
Rom. 3. 22. The righteousness of God is by
faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all
them that believe; for there is no difference.
So that I say thou mayst stand in this righte-
ousness, and put all the enemies of thy
salvation to the trial, and ask, *Who can lay*
any thing to thy charge? or condemn thee?
And thou mayst in effect hear from all the
like answer, which was made by other
things in *Job* in another case: Sin saith, It
is not in me; and Satan saith, It is not in me;
and the Law saith, It is not in me; and
Death saith, It is not in me; we have no-
thing to charge upon a justified person: and
therefore be always taking new and fresh
hold in this righteousness; for it is observa-
ble, that God doth not onely in a set and
solemn way, as in Sacraments, and Sermons,
&c. offer and give Jesus Christ; but also he
is constantly offering him in the Gospel,
and declaring it to be his will that we
should take him: and thou shouldst not
onely in the duties of Gods worship, but
also upon all opportunities in secret, and at
other times, be applying to thy self, and own-
ing and glorying in this righteousness of Je-
sus Christ; believe that God is always smel-
ling a sweet savour in this righteousness, as
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offered for thee, and that Christ is by his continual intercession presenting it to his Father for thee, and it's always offered in the Gospel to thee; do thou therefore always take it for thy righteousness to justifie thee, that when sickness and death come, thou mayst be found so doing.

Direct. 2. Learn to dye daily; for it is a certain truth, that *he that will live when he dies, must die whilst he lives*: and therefore Paul affirms it to be his practice, *1 Cor. 15. 31. I protest by your rejoycing that I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I dye daily.*

But how can a man dye daily?

Ans. Three ways.

1. By a daily separating and loosing his heart from all things, which death can loose him and separate him from: I mean so as not to account his life and happiness to consist in them. death you know is a separation from that which is our life. Now we have a kinde of life in husbands, wives, children, estates, &c. and when death comes, it separates us from these; therefore I say we dye daily by a daily loosening and parting the heart from them; this duty is clearly taught by the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31.* where
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the Apostle exhorts, that because our time to enjoy relations, pleasures and estates is but short, and we are presently to spend an eternity without them, therefore *let them that have wives be as though they had none, and they that rejoyce be as though they rejoyced not, and they that buy be as though they possessed not*; that is, they must live with their hearts loosed and parted from these things: for as a traveller useth the necessary accommodations of his Inn soberly, seasonably and cheerfully whilst he stays, yet so as to forward, and not to hinder his journey home: So a Christian must use the comforts of this life holly, cheerfully and thankfully, yet so as not to stop him in his way to heaven: Our sweetest enjoyments must neither make the thoughts of eternity less sweet, nor our passage into eternity more hard. Now hereby a man is very much prepared for sickness and death; for one thing which makes these so grievous, is, because the heart hath taken such hold of the creature, that it exceedingly torments him to be broken from it; so that it is often a greater trouble to loose his soul from the world, then to loose it from the body: but when by grace the heart is already loosed from the world, a great

part of deaths work is done already, because death findes him dead to the world when it comes to take him out of the world.

2. A man dyes daily, by a daily living on those things which he must live upon after death. We are commanded this duty, Col.

3. 1, 2. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth :* As the heart must be parted from the things on earth, so it must be set, and fixt, and fastned on the things in heaven : and this is the property of grace, to make the heart dead to the world, by turning it to a life in God, and Christ, and heaven. Now this also is a dying daily ; for death to a childe of God is a removing him from a life on earth, to a life in heaven ; and hereby he doth , as it were , go beyond death, and hath his life, and joy, and comfort in the other world : He walks by faith in the streets of *the City that hath foundations*, and rests and refresheth his soul *in his house not made with hands* ; he secretly departs from the company and comforts of this life, and gets his heart among Angels and Saints in heaven, beholding, and praising, and rejoycing

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joycing in the face of God and Jesus Christ. Now such a man must needs be fit to dye, because his heart is set on every thing that death brings him unto: Like *Paul*, who having his heart fixt on Christ in heaven, cries out, *Phil. 1. 23. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.*

Lastly, a man dyes daily, by daily looking upon himself as a dying or dead man: he lays death to his heart, *Eccles. 7. 2.* his heart is full of the serious thoughts of death, *Job 17. 13, 14. If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.* Ah sirs, to one that knows he shall dye and sleep in Jesus, death and the worms are as sweet as his dearest relations. And thus a man prepares for death, when he doth, as it were, accustom himself to dye, and makes death familiar to him. Christians, look upon your selves, as always at the very point of death; when you are putting your flowers in your bosoms, remember you are, as it were, dressing a Corpse for the grave; when you are washing and kemberg your heads and faces, and looking on them in the glass, remember what ghastly skulls they will be shortly; yet let thy thoughts be often

often among the graves; think, here lyes my Grand-father and Grand-mother; there lyes my Father and Mother; yonder lyes my Brother and Sister; and I my self am just going to lye down amongst them. Thus learn to dye daily.

Direct. 3. Labour by an eye of faith to discern between things that differ. Beloved, faith hath a very deep and piercing insight into things; it judgerh of things by Scripture, it believes what God in his Word speaks of them; and so a believers carriage towards every thing is according as the Word describes and presents it to him: and surely this makes people so unprepared to dye, because they want an understanding of things: It cannot sink into their hearts, that sin is so bad, and Christ so good; or the world so vain, or grace so precious; or hell so terrible, or heaven so glorious: but they are so confident that lust is sweet, and riches are precious, and death is far off, and hell is but a bug bear, and heaven is but a fanisie: And in this confidence they will live and dye; and therefore the Apostle prayes that the *Philippians may try things that differ, that they may be fit for the day of Christ.* I shall therefore give you this Directi-

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on in these following particulars.

1. Look upon God and the world together, and you shall see the difference ; for this end I beseech you search and believe that Scripture, *Isa. 40. 15, 17. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance. Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.* Now let thy heart judge of, and act towards God and the world, according to this difference : Set all the world before thee, give every creature its due ; see what a vast world of Kingdoms and Nations it is ; look upon the strong Islands which are fortified and moted about with the Seas, which this great God takes up as a very little thing ; see a world of great and mighty men before thee ; see the rich world of gold , and silver , and precious stones, lying on heaps before thee ; look upon the lands and buildings which make all the woods, fields, pastures, meadows, orchards, vineyards, gardens, towns, cities and stately houses in the world. O what a glorious world is this, which made the very Angels *shout for joy at the rearing of it !* Well, Job 38. 7. take a full survey of the glory and beauty of

of this great world : and then looking on a drop of water hanging on a bucket, what a poor thing is this? which is ready to break, and fall on the ground, and no body catcheth at it : look also upon the small dust of the balance, a thing of neither weight nor worth, it doth not so much as turn the scales : Now labour by faith to have such a clear insight into the greatness and goodness of God and Jesus Christ, that thou mayst be able to judge all the world to be but as a drop of the bucket, or as the small dust of the balance, to thy Father and Saviour ; and let thy whole man act according to such a wise, holy, just judgement : and this will exceedingly fit thee for sickness and death, which come to loose thee from such a vain world, into the presence and everlasting injoyment of such a glorious God.

2. Look upon sin, and upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ ; look upon these together. Beloved, faith hath a deep insight into the evil of sin, for it sees the glory of God, which sin is against, wherein the evil of it appears, and believes the dreadful curses of the law, and what the wrath of God, and what hell is, and what an immortal being a man is that must suffer these. Faith also hath

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of Christs righteousness; it sees what an in-
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to the Father; and for this reason, so all-
sufficient for faith to rest and live upon:
for this is the precious property of justify-
ing faith, that it receives Christs righteouf-
ness for salvation, for the same reason
which God receives it for satisfaction; that
is, because it is the righteousness of God;
and indeed, faith must see God satisfied, be-
fore it can see the believer saved: and see-
ing enough in Christ for the satisfaction of
God, it sees the same sufficiencie in him for
the salvation of the Believer. Now Christs
righteousness never appears more precious
then when the soul is filled with the deep-
est sight and sense of sin; for then the
soul believes him to be a great Saviour,
when he sees the great evil of sin which
he saves him from: and therefore it is ob-
servable, that the Apostle demonstrates the
direful guilt and filth of sin, as a preface to
that great Doctrine of Justification by
faith in the righteousness of Christ, *Rom.*
3. from *vers.* 9. to the end of that Cha-
pter.

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And as you know, it was a sad and fearful case for the poor Jews to be *bitten with the fiery Serpents*, and to lye groaning under the pain and anguish of those poisonous and deadly wounds: yet then what a glorious sight was it to look upon *the brazen Serpent*, and thereby to finde power and vertue to heal them presently?

So, my Brethren, it is a fearful case in it self, for a man to stand in the very jaws of death, and to look into the horrid nature of sin, and see death, and devils, and hell, and all the curses of the law ready to flee in his face: and yet how glorious is it then to look upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and see them all swallowed up, and himself saved? And thus as he sees the grace of God in Christ *raigning and over-abounding* all sin, *Rom. 5. 20, 21.* so his faith, and hope, and joy grounded thereon, doth rise above, and over-abound and swallow up all his fears of death and hell which he was in because of his sins.

3. Look upon all your sufferings on earth, and upon the glory of heaven together. The Apostle tells us, *Act. 14. 22. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.* Observe, there is an en-

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 lies through much tribulation: an hypocrite
 seems to go strongly in the way to heaven,
 but oftentimes when he comes to trouble,
 persecution, &c. there he is stopt, and can
 go no farther; but he that believes the good-
 ness of duty, and the glory of heaven, if
 tribulation, sickness, poverty, persecution
 seek to stop him, he goes through them; he
 knows duty is sweet and safe, and there-
 fore he will follow it, till it bring him to
 heaven, whatever it cost him. *Tertullian*
 comforts the Martyrs in prison with this,
 That in their close and dark prisons they
 might see *illam viam, quæ ad Deum ducit*,
that way which leads them to God: There is
 a way to heaven out of prison, sick-bed, or
 any other affliction. Hence those that come
 to heaven, are said to come *out of great tri-
 bulation*, Rev. 7. 14. Sometimes a poor Saint
 comes hot, as it were, out of the furnace of
 affliction into heaven; from chains and
 bolts in a prison, he is loosed into heaven;
 from gasping and groaning upon a sick-bed,
 to heaven: surely when he comes there, he
 findes a strange alteration. Well, look up-
 on thy self now as standing between the
 two worlds: a world of sin, snares, perse-
 cution,

cution, poverty, sickness and death on the one hand; and a world of life, and immortality, and fulness of inconceivable joy and pleasure on the other hand. Thus the Apostle seems to stand, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. we stand looking from our afflictions, on the things that are not seen. So Rom 8. 17, 18. *If we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him.* Well, put these together; put the persecution from wicked men, and the Crown of Glory together; put a moment of pain and misery on a sick bed, and an eternity of joy in heaven together; and thou must needs conclude with the Apostle, *vers. 18. For I reckon (saith he) I have cast them both up, and I finde, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

Lastly, look upon time and eternity together. Oh what is time, when a man looks into eternity! it seems but a breath, a twinkling of an eye, a stroke of a pulse, to a man that sees eternity before him. Methinks a believer is like a man on a hill by the sea-side: he sees a little spot of ground, and the great Ocean lying beyond it; so he sees a little spot of time, and the great Ocean of eternity lying beyond it: he sees
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the end of all things: Oh, saith he, I am gone, I am gone: look how all the honours, and riches, and comforts of this life do vanish out of my sight; and everlasting fire, or everlasting glory will receive me presently! Sirs, this would make us live in a posture to dye, if we did but see what a little while it is before we must sit with Christ in heaven, or burn with Devils in hell.

Direct. 4. Labour to *fill up your time*: this is the way to fit you for eternity: but you will say, What is it to fill up our time?

Ans. Time is filled by applying our time to that work which God hath given us our time for: God hath given us time for our callings, *to labour and do all that we have to do*; time to worship God, and do his will; time for recreations, meat, drink, sleep, &c. and by all these, to honour God, to be blessings to men, and to seek salvation for our selves: and by doing these things, we fill our time: as for example, if a man should write down his days work, (not that I would impose upon the consciences of men) So long I was slugging in bed, so long I was glutting at meat, so long filling my self with drink, at such a time
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belching out oaths ; and then look upon this on a sick-bed, here would be a black day to look upon, such a day would make work in eternity. So if a man spend a day in idleness, as *Seneca* speaks of some idle persons, *that are busied between the comb and the looking-glass* ; now if such a one were to write his days work, he must leave a blank for such a day, which would cause itinging reflections when he comes to know the loss of his precious time : But if a godly man should write down, Such an hour I spent in secret prayer and meditation, such an hour in family-worship, such a time in the works of my calling, and such time in a sober use of recreations ; now if this were done in a right manner, notwithstanding many invincible infirmities, yet here is a day well filled, and may cause sweet reflections, when he sees his days ending in eternity. Now that you may thus improve, and fill up your time, I shall briefly give you these five Directions.

1. Labour to have your hearts filled with grace. Beloved, a mans time is full of that which his heart is full of ; the heart fills the tongue, and fills the life, and so fills the time. *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 10. 20. The heart of the wicked is little worth* : when all that is

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in a mans heart is good for nothing, neither good to honour God, nor to save himself, nor others, then his time must needs be good for nothing; it must needs be an empty, sinful, unprofitable time; for such a man hath nothing to fill up his time with. But on the contrary, our Saviour tells us, *Matth. 12. 35. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things:* The graces of Gods Spirit make a good treasure in the heart; and all things that come from faith, love, humility, meekness, &c. are good things, and do much good: and a mans time is happily filled, that is full of prayer, of holiness, of godly conference, &c. which are all brought forth out of the good treasure of grace in the heart.

2. Do nothing in time, but what will pass in your account, when your time is at an end: Christ will one day say to thee, *Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayst be no longer steward, Luk. 16. 2.* Give an account of thy Health, Life, Parts, Estate; of Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, and all thy precious opportunities; for thou must no longer use or enjoy these. Now what a sad reckoning will here be, if he hath done nothing with these that will

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pass in his account? as if a great man intrust a servant to be his Steward, and commit to him his money, rents, &c. to disburse according to his Masters pleasure: Now if when the Steward is called to give up his account, he is able to reckon, So much laid out for provision for the family, so much for the education of the children, so much to relieve the poor; these things will pass in his account: but if he reckons, So much wasted in drunkenness, so much converted to my own use, &c. the Master will never accept of this. So, my Brethren, when God calls us to an account of our stewardship, if a man can say, Lord, I spent my estate in the education of my children, in feeding and maintaining my family, in relieving the poor; I spent my parts in making God and Christ known to others; I spent my time to please and praise thee, to profit others, and save my self; these things will pass in thy account, and thou shalt be sure of thy reward and honour of a faithful servant, when the time of my Stewardship is expired: but if it appear that a man hath wasted his estate on his lusts, and spent his time in his sins, his account must needs be sad, when he must have hell for his wages: what-
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ever ye do, consider whether it will pass in your account; and look upon every thing now, as it will prove when you are to give an account for it. It is a remarkable expression, *Phil. 4. 17.* I desire fruit that may abound to your account; many things which a believer doth with an upright heart, seem but little now, but they will rise, and abound to his glory, when he comes to give an account.

3. Do nothing but what thou art willing to have thy self; the very Nation wherein thou livest, and thy time, to have a name from the doing of it: for it is observable, that the actions of men give a name to these three things, *viz.* to themselves, to the places, and to the times wherein they live.

1. Then do nothing but what thou wouldst have a name from the doing of it: man loves sin, but he cannot endure to be called according to his sins; but if thou dost abhor the name of a drunkard, swearer, lyar, why dost thou live in the sins of drunkenness, swearing and lying?

2. Do nothing that thou wouldst not have the land to have a name from; for the land hath a name from the practice of the people; a holy people make a holy nation; a

prophane, unclean, perfidious people make a land of prophaneſs, of whoredoms, of treachery, &c. What ſins thou liveſt in, thou doſt not onely make thy ſelf, but alſo, as much as in thee lies, thou makeſt the land laothſome to God and men.

3. Do nothing which thou wouldeſt not have thy time have a name from; it makes thee have ſad thoughts to think of the time of drunkenneſs, whoredom, lying, &c. but times of prayer, meditation, holy conference, &c. are ſweet.

4. Take heed of idleneſs; this ſin makes empty and unprofitable times, and leaves people unprepared for ſickneſs. When *Calvin* was reproved for inordinate labour, he gives this favourable answer: *What*, ſaith he, *would ye have my Lord finde me idle?* Sirs, would you have ſickneſs, and death, and the day of judgement finde you idle? Our Saviour in the Parable having intruſted his ſervants with their talents, he bids them, *Occupy till I come*, Luk. 19. 13. See Chriſt's coming, and improve your talents for him till he come. Now that you may abhor this ſin of idleneſs,

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within himself, he can never see his heart stand still. We read of some, 2 *Thess.* 3. 11. *Who work not at all*, and yet are *busie-bodies*. Sirs, the soul is quick at work; a man may quickly lay up abundance of treasures in heaven or hell: For as *Bernard* saith well, *If you are not exercised in the labours of men, you are in the labours of devils.*

2. Make the work of Salvation thy main business; labour to turn every day into a day of Salvation. Sirs, it is an excellent thing for a man to live so in his calling, relations, recreations, afflictions, duties of Gods worship, as if all the powers of his body and soul were set upon the work of Salvation: this will keep a man from idleness; *For that man will never want business, that knows he hath a soul to save.*

3. Consider what little time thou hast for this great work: perhaps it may never be done, if it be not done now: they were fools that said, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye*: it had been a wiser speech to have said, *Let us repent, believe and pray, for to morrow we dye.*

4. Consider what thou hast to set thee on work, and to keep thee from idleness,

look into hell, and see sin, and the world, and devils thrusting thee therein, and thou wilt finde it business enough to save thee from those unquenchable flames: Look into heaven, and see God, and Christ, and Ministers, and Christians always calling thee thither; and see thy own sins, carnal friends, men, devils, a world of stumbling-blocks lying in thy way to stop thee from going into that everlasting happiness, and thou wilt finde work enough to go to heaven: Look into thy self, and see what sins thou hast to conquer and bewail, what wants to supply, what graces to quicken and ripen, what duties to perform, what storms and troubles to prepare against: Look on God, on Christ, and see what objects are there, for all the powers of thy body and soul to be exercised upon. Hast thou any time for idle thoughts, or words, or affections, that hast such a God and Christ to think of, and to speak of, and to set and fix thy heart, and love, and delight upon! Look into the family, and town, and place where thou livest, and see Christless parents, or Christless children, or Christless brothers and sisters, or Christless servants, or Christless neighbours, and thou mayst have that in thee to speak or do, which

which man shall they idleness? dom where in thou m to them; ment to Kingdom look upon Heavens Plants, & Power, and, as it thee, that honour a these things,

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which may save their souls from hell; and shall they perish and be damned by thy idleness? Look into the Church and Kingdom where thou livest, and consider wherein thou mayst serve them, and be a blessing to them; and how thou mayst be an instrument to fill them with the Name, and Kingdom, and Will of Jesus Christ: Nay, look upon every creature about thee, the Heavens, Earth, Waters, Birds, Beasts, Plants, &c. see them all filled with the Power, Wisdom and goodness of God, and, as it were, bringing their praises to thee, that thou mayst be their mouth to honour and exalt God. Methinks, Sirs, these things should keep us from idleness.

5. That thou mayst fill up thy time, take heed of losing a suffering opportunity. Beloved, a suffering opportunity is a precious opportunity; it's an opportunity to honour God, further the Gospel, to save thy own and others souls, to be a blessing to thy posterity, and to leave thy name as a blessed favour behinde thee. I would not tempt men to lust after sufferings; I know the Devil would have his servants to serve him by passive as well as active obedience; yet I would have none so base, as to chuse

to sin rather than to suffer, and to prefer Apostasie before Martyrdom. Sometimes a man may fall into such a nick of time, that duty may cost him his life, and a sin may save his life: This case is implied in the words of our Saviour, *Mat. 16. 25. Whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall save it.* Now that is a sad loss of a suffering opportunity, when a man saves himself from suffering by sin: Consider the fearful consequences of this; hereby thou savest thy estate, name, life, and lovest thy soul; which is clearly implied in the next words, *vers. 26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Remember, when thou runnest into a known sin, to avoid suffering, thou makest a bargain, thou makest an exchange; thou gettest the world, and the Devil and Hell get thy soul. Consider further, it is the highest improvement of thy name, estate and life, to sacrifice it to the glory and will of Christ, by suffering for him: this is the best that thou canst make of thy self. Sirs, it is more honourable (if thou art called to it) to be burned at a stake for Christ, then to be burned with

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Fever ; or to die for Christ in a Prison, then to die in a sick bed.

Consider lastly , What a woful case will sickness and death finde thee in, when those evils which thou fearedst from men , shall be brought upon thee by God ; when God shall fill thy body with greater pains then the cruellest Persecutor could invent or inflict ! Oh what a loss will then a suffering opportunity be, when a man may say, I had an opportunity to lose my life, and save my soul ; and now I must lose my life, and my poor soul too !

Direct. 5. That you may be prepared for sickness and death, do nothing but what you would have sickness and death finde you doing. Remember, what ever thou art about , that sickness and death may finde thee in it : Death found *Zimri* and *Cozbi* in whoredom, *Numb.* 25.8. and Death took *Ananias* and *Saphira* in a lye, *Acts* 5. and Death caught *Eutychus* sleeping at a Sermon, *Acts* 20. 9.

And on the other hand , God took *Enoch* walking with God, *Gen.* 5. 24. And when *Elijah* and *Elisha* were talking together, no doubt of some good , *Elijah* was fain to break off his good discourse to go to heaven , *2 Kings* 2. 11. and Christ went blessing

blessing his people to heaven, *Luke 24. 51.* And good *Stephen*, as he was praying, was taken from off his knees into heaven, *Acts 7. 60.* Oh Sirs, if you would not go lying, or swearing, or drunk, or swaggering, or ranting into Eternity, do not practise these sins now, but walk in your callings, recreations and duties, as if you saw sickness and death fetching you out of these into heaven.

Direct. 6. Labour to be filled with a merciful and tender disposition towards others in their sickness and misery; this is a sure way for thee to finde mercy from God in thy sickness: *With the merciful, thou wilt shew thy self merciful*, *Psal. 18. 25.* *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*, *Matth. 5. 7.* We have a precious promise to this purpose, *Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3.* *Blessed is he that considereth the poor.* By the poor is meant, not only the poor in estate, but also those that are poor and afflicted, in respect of other afflictions. And it's a most blessed frame of heart for men, when they sit in health, and at ease, and swim in wealth, to be seriously considering their poor diseased and afflicted brethren: *The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive.*

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24. 51. The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness. I say therefore, shew mercy to others in their sickness; and when the day of sickness, and death, and judgment comes, thou shalt be sure (as Paul prayed for Onesiphorus in the like case) to finde mercy at that day. ^{2 Tim. 1. 18.}

Direct. 7. Be fully satisfied in the belief of Gods care and providence towards thy friends whom thou art to leave behinde thee. Beloved, it makes the thoughts of sickness and death more grievous to many, because of the sad and miserable condition which their poor Orphans and Widows will be left in when they are gone; and especially if their condition be like that of learned and godly *Oecolampadius*, who when he should have made his Will, had nothing to bequeath. But this trouble is not so much for want of an Estate, as for want of Faith: therefore go cheartfully to your sick beds, or death-beds, with the belief of these following Scriptures, *Jer. 49. 11. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy Widdows trust in me.* In which words, as appears by the context, God threatens the *Edomites*, that their children and wives shall be left so desolate,

solate, that they shall have none but God to provide for them : Yet God is so tender of poor fatherless children and widdows, that though they were of the families and posterity of *Esau*, yet, saith he, *I will preserve them alive*. How much more tender then will he be of the poor families of his *Jacob* !

See also *Psal.* 10. 14. *The poor committeth his cause to thee ; thou art the helper of the fatherless*. Perhaps it troubles thee to think what a company of poor helpless children thou art to leave behinde thee : Why consider, the infinite and all-sufficient God makes it one of his great works to help fatherless children ; therefore this great Creator of the world will be glorified by this name, *The helper of the fatherless*.

See further, *Psal.* 68. 3, 4, 5. Observe here, one great reason why the righteous must be glad, and exceedingly rejoyce, and sing forth the praises of God, is, because he is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widdow in his holy habitation. Observe, *In his holy habitation* : God is in heaven, not only filling Angels and Saints with his glorious likeness and presence, but he is there also full of gracious thoughts to-
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out God towards poor fatherless children and wid-
 so tender lows upon earth. And although I do not
 widows, think that there is any intercourse betwixt
 families and a Saint in heaven, and his family upon
 will pre- earth; and I do not know that he will in
 e tender heaven be offering prayers for them upon
 es of his earth; yet I do not doubt but he will there
 know, that he hath left a family behinde
 commit- him upon earth, and by his glorious vision
 e helper of God, will see that Infinite Power and
 les thee Providence which provides for his and all
 helpless other families upon earth, so far as is for
 e thee: his own glory, and the good of his Church.

fficient See again, *Hosea 14. 3. In thee the fa-
 orks to therless finde mercy.* It may trouble thee to
 e this think, that although now thy wife and
 orified children are respected for thy sake, yet
 father- when thou art gone, they are like to finde
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 aven, clude this with the exhortation of the A-
 h his postle, *Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing,
 he is but in every thing by prayer and supplication
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known unto God : and then, as to any trouble about these things , *The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

Direct. 8. Labour to make a wise and holy use of the spectacles of mortality; look upon your selves as following your dead neighbours and friends , whom you see going before you into Eternity. It is said of a dead man , *Job 21. 33. The clods of the valley (viz. the Graves and Sepulchres) shall be sweet unto him ; and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable gone before him.* Consider , when you see any one buried , that he is gone to an innumerable company that are dead and buried before him , and that every man shall draw after him. Oh remember , that you are drawing after your dead grandfathers, and fathers, and friends, which are gone before you. Poor wretch, thou thinkest that thou shouldest be like thy Neighbours, to have as much wealth , and honours, and pleasures as they : but look upon other Neighbours, who are *lodged in the chambers of death*, and remember , thou art shortly to be like unto them. The very carcases in the graves are ready to say unto thee, as the Prophet brings in the inhabitants

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habitants of the Tombs crying to the King of Babylon, *Isai. 14. 10. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?* Look upon every thing about thy friends Funeral with a particular application to thy self; look on the Bier at the door, as if it stood there to receive thee; look on the Coffin, as if it were made for thee; and look on the Winding-sheet, as if it were washt and made ready for thee: Look on the Sextons Spade, as ready to dig a grave for thee: Certainly these things would prove excellent means to fit us for sickness and death.

Direct. 9. Keep up a spirit of prayer; for surely a man is in a great measure fit to die, who is fit to pray. This appears by the Preface to the Petitions in the Lords Prayer, *Our Father which art in heaven;* whereby we see, that a Child of God by prayer doth, as it were, part from the world, and is with his Father which is in Heaven. Hence, *Heb. 10. 19.* Prayer is called, *An entering into the Holiest, viz. into Heaven:* Besides, it is easie to demonstrate, that the same things which make us fit to pray, make us fit to die, and that a praying frame is a dying frame; for our hearts

are most set upon those things when we pray, which we must receive when we die: Death brings us to the things which we pray for; and he that is unwilling to die, is unwilling to receive an answer to his own prayers. Beloved, it often puzzles the thoughts of men, to think what will be the issue of things, what things will come to at the last. Now it seems to me a clear and excellent expedient for our satisfaction herein, to study well the Lords Prayer, and to believe that all the Petitions therein shall certainly be granted; and whatever we see before, for certain at the Day of Judgment every Petition therein shall be fulfilled: and therefore the more a mans heart is set on those things for which we are thereby taught and bound to pray, the more ready and fit he is for Death and Judgment. Prayer is one of the first and last things of a Christian: so soon as ever the spiritual life is begun, it presently breathes in prayer; and I am perswaded, that the godly do usually die in prayer.

Last Direct. Live as one that knows that there are bounds set to thy life: It makes many so unprepared for sickness and death, because they look upon their lives as boundsless; they always think they have some

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time to live, and therefore think of no
 time to die. Now it is clear, that God hath
 set bounds to the life of every man; and
 when he comes to those bounds, he is
 stopt, and can go no further, *Job 14.5.*
Thou hast appointed his bounds, that he can-
not pass. Proud men climb to such a height
 of preferment; and as they are rising
 higher, Death stops them, and they can
 go no further: The covetous man gets such
 an estate; and as he is reaching after
 greater wealth, Death stops him, that he
 can get no more. Oh what a sudden stop
 did Death cause that rich Fool to make, *Luk. 12:20*
 when he was constrained to die the same
 very night, when he thought he was, as
 it were, beginning to live: The malici-
 ous man goes to such a height of persecu-
 ting the godly; and as he is raging in his
 malice and madness, Death stops him, that
 he can go no farther. Oh what a stop did
Haman meet with in the very height of his
 bloody designe against the Church of God!
 On the other hand, the poor Childe of
 God is zealous in worshipping and serving
 God; and as he is seeking to serve and
 praise him more, Death stops him, and
 his work is done: therefore do every thing
 as knowing that thou mayst meet with thy
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bounds, and be stopt in the very midst of thy work: *All the daies of my appointed time will I wait till my change come*, faith Job, Cap. 14. 14. Job knew that there was a change to come, and that Death would make a great alteration with him shortly; and that there was a secret time appointed for this change; therefore he will every day wait and look for it. Think with thy self in a morning, I may see a great change before night; and think with thy self at night, I may see a great alteration before morning. Sirs, when a man goes from his house, friends, food and estate, to heaven or hell, believe it, he will finde a great alteration. Oh then live, as if every day were to be the day of thy change; as if every journey, and work, and duty, would bring thee to the end and bounds of thy life.

So much for Exhortation, to be prepared for sickness and death.

The next Exhortation is to such who have been visited with sickness, but are by the mercy and power of Jesus Christ restored to health. I shall exhort such to these five duties.

1. Bless and praise God, who hath restored thee to thy health: God tells his people,

midst of the, *Exod. 15. 26. I am the God that heal-*
appointed thee : And certainly there comes power
 e, faith and virtue from Jesus Christ to heal our
 t there diseases: Therefore when Christ had heal-
 t Death the woman diseased with an issue of
 th him blood twelve years, *I perceive, saith he, that*
 ret time *virtue is gone from me,* Luke 8. 46. And be-
 he will loved, when ever we have been diseased
 nk with and restored, there came virtue from Christ
 a great into the head, or lungs, or liver, or where
 ith thy over the disease lay, and caused the cure;
 eration which we must in all thankfulness acknow-
 n goes ledge. Thus did *David, Psal. 116. 6.--8. I*
 ate, to *was brought low, and he helped me. ———*
 finde a *for thou hast delivered my soul from death,*
 f every *my eyes from tears, and my feet from fall-*
 age; as *ing.* Now for the performance of this du-
 l duty, ty of praising God, observe these five di-
 unds of rections.

1. Get a clear knowledge of the glori-
 ous and excellent Name of God, *Psal. 76. 1.*
In Judah is God known, his name is great in
Israel. Gods Name is great only where it
 is known; and it is a most savoury thing
 to hear people speak of God, as those that
 know whom they speak of: Where God is
 thus savingly known, the workings of the
 heart towards God are answerable to the
 glory and excellency of his Name, *Psal.*

48. 10. *According to thy Name, O God, so is thy praise*, Psal. 150. 2. *Praise the Lord according to his excellent greatness*. Grace is more or less in a man, according to his knowledge and sense of the Name of God and Jesus Christ: In that heart where God hath no Name, the man hath no Grace; but it causeth great faith, and great love, and great joy in a Believer, to see the great power, and the great love, and the great goodness of God and Jesus Christ.

2. Praise God as he is a God of mercy to thee; ascribe unto him a name from that which he hath done for thee, *Psal. 42. 8. My prayer shall be to the God of my life*. He honours God with this Title, *The God of his life*, Psal. 59. 10. *The God of my mercy*, Psal. 18. 1, 2. *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer*. — Believe it poor Christian, that the God of all the world is pleased and praised by thy calling him thy God; and therefore praise God as his glory shines and appears in all other things, and as it appears to thee: As thus, the God of all the world, and my God; the Father of Jesus Christ, and my Father; the God of life and health to his people, and the God of my life, and of my health.

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3. Labour to the utmost of thy power to fill all places with the Name of God, and Jesus Christ, *Psal. 66. 2. Make his praise glorious.* This is a right praising God, when we endeavour to make his Name glorious in the hearts of all that are about us: our lives should be such, that in every thing that we do, there may be reason to cause others to love, bless, praise, and rejoyce in God, *Mat. 5. 16.* Our works should be such, that they should set all that see them on work to glorifie our Father which is in heaven; and we should live so, that it may be an honour to God to be called the God of such a people. Now is it any honour to God to be called the God of Drunkards, or the God of Swearers, or the God of Whoremongers? No, no; but as Master *Latimer* said, they may say, *Our father which art in hell:* But the God of Believers, the God of all that love him, and fear him, and seek him, it is his honour to be called the God of such a people; and, as it is said, *Heb. 11. 16. He is not ashamed to be called their God.*

4. Let every thing that hath been the subject of mercy, be the instrument of praise. *David* calls upon all that is within him to praise Gods holy Name — *Who*

healeth all his diseases, Psal. 103, 1, 3. -- And we are commanded to yield our *members as instruments of righteousness unto God*, Rom. 6. 13. Sirs, every member of a Christian is a member of Christ, and the Life of Christ spreads all over, and fills his whole body; and this life should branch out in all the parts and members of our bodies: Christ hath bought and paid for all; the Law bindes all; every member can be an instrument of sin, every member must at last be clothed with glory: therefore we should *glorifie God with our bodies and souls, which are Gods*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. Consider, What may I do for God with my tongue, hands, feet, countenance? &c. Perhaps, not long since, thy whole body was overspread with a disease, and *there was no soundness in thy flesh, because of Gods anger; neither was there any rest in thy bones, because of thy sins*: Never a bone or joynt was free from pain. Now then, seeing God hath healed all, thou shouldest say with David, Psal. 35. 10. *All my bones may say, Lord, who is like to thee?*

Psal. 88. 3.

Lastly, Let the consideration of the greatness of thy mercy, cause thee to praise God: Consider this in four particulars.

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1. Thou art restored to life; God hath, as it were, clearly given thee a life: We have this passage in *Jer. 45. 5.* and elsewhere in Scripture, *Thy life will I give unto thee for a prey*; the meaning seems to be thus, that when a mans life is in great danger, though he suffer divers losses, yet if his life be saved, he triumphs in the preservation of his life, as if he had got a great prey or spoil from an enemy. Now to apply this to the present case: perhaps thou hast suffered divers losses and crosses in thy sickness, and now thou art restored: thou mayst see many things sad in the Church, and in thy family; but thy life *is given instead of a prey to thee*, and in this thou hast cause to rejoyce: Look at thy life, and consider what a mercie that is, and thou wilt see great reason to praise God in the midst of thy greatest afflictions. Oh then let thy life be laid out to the will and glory of God: say with *David* after his recovery from a great danger, *Psal. 116. 9. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living*; do nothing but what thou canst with comfort do before the Lord, as seeing the all-seeing God looking on.

2. Thou art restored to thy health; consider how lately the *multitude of thy bones* were

were tortured *with strong pains* ; thy stomach was gone, and *thy life did abhor bread, and thy soul dainty meat*, Job 33. 19, 20. Thou wouldst have given much for a nights sleep, when *wearisome nights were appointed to thee*, Job 7. 3. yet now God hath given thee health, he hath caused *thy bones to rejoyce*, and *filled thy heart with food and gladness*, and *thou liest down, and thy sleep is sweet unto thee*.

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3. Thou art restored to thy friends and relations ; to thy husband, wife, children, parents, brothers and sisters, and to thy dear and bosom-friends : the day would have been sad to *these mourners going about the streets, following thee to thy long home* : But now God hath *restored comfort to thee, and to thy mourners*, Isa. 5. 18. therefore let the sight of all thy friends fill thee with a fresh sense of the goodness and mercie of God : Say as *Jacob* said of his Brother *Esau* in another case, Gen. 33. 10. *I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God* : See the gracious face and presence of God shining upon thee in the face of all thy friends ; look on thy yoke-fellow, and look upon God ; look on thy parents, and look upon God ; look on thy children, &c. and look upon God ; and so

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as the sight of every friend fills thee with new and fresh thoughts of thy mercie, let it also renew in thee a fresh and thankful remembrance of the God of thy mercie.

Lastly, thou art restored to thy blessed and soul-saving opportunities. Sirs, if we consider how precious time is, we must needs acknowledge this to be a precious mercie: now that you may see time precious, and so for this reason may esteem your recovery a precious mercie; look on thy time as the season allowed thee to glorifie God, and to work out the Salvation of thy soul: you know in other cases we prize our time according to the worth of those things which time gives us an opportunity to gain: as the husbandman accounts Harvest-time precious, because it is his season to reap the *precious fruits of the earth*, as *St. James* calls them, *Jam. 5. 7.* The Merchant accounts the time precious when the wind blows him to his prize. The soldier accounts the time precious when he marches for his life.

And is not that time much more precious which God hath given thee to save thy soul? If God, and Christ, and Heaven, and Grace, and the Soul be precious, then

Christs Power over

then that time must needs be precious, which gives thee an opportunity to gain these. The Apostle determines this, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation*: Now God is offering Christ for thy Salvation; now the Spirit is striving for thy Salvation; now Ministers are praying, preaching and travelling for thy Salvation. Thus God fills thy time with salvation-work. Oh then what a mercy it is to be restored to such precious opportunities! when perhaps, if thou hadst dyed in thy last sickness, thou wast in great danger to be damned; and now thou hast time to labour to be saved.

The second Duty to be performed by those who are restored to health, is this; Keep up a frequent remembrance of thy visitation, and of the Lords dealing with thee therein. It seems by the contents of it, that *David* penned *Psalms* 38. in a time of great sickness; and it's very observable, that he gives that *Psalms* this title, *A psalm of David to bring to remembrance*: Implying, that one special use of this *Psalms* was to bring his sickness to remembrance: Whence we may learn, that it is our duty in our health to be often remembering the hand of God in our sickness; when thou art full
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of mirth, and findeſt thy heart apt to be looſe from God in thy recreations ; then remember the pains of ſickneſs, and this will cauſe a ſpirit of moderation and ſobriety to rule thy heart : when thou art going to worſhip God, it may much quicken thee with a new and freſh ſpirit, to conſider how near thou waſt to eternity in ſuch a ſickneſs, and to go to duty as one that is newly riſen out of a ſick-bed ; and that thou art ſtill praying, hearing, receiving Sacraments, as it were, in the very gates of death.

So when thou art tempted to any ſin, remember thy ſickneſs : conſider, Wilt thou bring again upon thy ſelf an Ague, Fever, Droplie, Conſumption &c? Beloved, in abundance of caſes it will do your ſouls much good to be often remembering your viſitation.

Thirdly, examine what good thou haſt got by thy viſitation. Beloved, many come out of a ſickneſs like Rogues out of a gaol ; Rogues they went in, and worſe Rogues they come out : So they were Drunkards, Whoremongers, Perſecutors of Gods people, when they went into ſickneſs ; and are far worſe, and more hardned in their ſins, when they come out of ſickneſs : Let us therefore

therefore all examine what good we have got by our sickness; as you know after a man hath been in a course of Physick, he observes whether he coughs less, or burns less, &c. and whether his stomach be better, and strength better, and sleep better; so if thou hast been in a course of sickness, observe whether thy corruptions abate, and whether thy heart be better since thy visitation: is pride less, and peevishness less, and covetousness less? and canst thou pray better, and sanctifie Sabbaths better, and hear Sermons better? and is thy discourse better, and thy life better? *David* upon search found sweet experience of the blessed effect of his affliction, *Psal. 119. 67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy statutes*: So, canst thou say, Before I was sick, I could not endure to be provoked; I was very light and loose in company, I was very apt to be proud and self-conceited; but now I bless God I am more patient, and more serious, and more humble.

Fourthly, take special care to avoid sin after thy recovery; I say to thee, as Christ said to another upon the same occasion, *Job. 5. 14. Thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*: Thou thoughtest

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thoughtest thy disease was very bad and grievous; but consider, there are worse things than thy sickness was, worse pains and worse miseries. Oh then sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee: I shall press this duty in these four Particulars.

First, watch especially against those sins which thou wast most inclined unto before thy sickness. Some conceive that the impotent man before-mentioned, was visited especially for some particular sin, which our Saviour did particularly aim at in bidding him *sin no more*. The Apostle tells us of some, *2 Pet. 2. 22. that return with the dog to his own vomit*; where he compares those that seemed to loath sin, and after return to the same sin, to a sick dog, which when he hath eased himself by vomiting up that which made him sick, goes and licks up again his own loathsome vomit: and so we see very many who lick up in time of health those very sins which they seemed to loath and vomit up in time of sickness. Beloved, sin appears in its actings most strong, when the instruments are most strong therewith a man commits it; and the weakness of the instruments causeth a weakness in the actings of sin; and therefore when the body is

Christs Power over

is weak, all those sins which are fulfilled by the body, seem weak too : but now when the body gathers strength, as a man hath strength to eat, and strength to work, and strength to walk ; so without the mighty power of the Spirit, strength will also return into sin. Therefore I say, Watch, and pray, and fight against those sins which thou wast most apt to commit before thy sickness.

Secondly , take heed of surfeiting with the profits, and pleasures, and preferments of the world ; for as a man after long fasting is apt to surfeit when he returns to his meat ; so when a man by sickness hath been long with-held from the creature , there appears such a fresh kinde of pleasure and delight in the world, and the heart is so eager in the desires of it, that there is great danger of being gluttoned with it : We should therefore receive all the blessings of the creature, as the *Israelites* did eat the Pass-over, *Exod. 12. 11.* where we finde that they were to eat the Pass-over, as those that were ready to go out of *Egypt* towards *Canaan*, *with their loyns girt, their shoes on their feet, their staves in their hands, and they were to eat it in haste.* So, my Brethren, we should eat, drink, buy, sell, work,

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when away into eternity, and as if we were ready
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Thirdly, Beware of security: for we are
apt herein to be like *Pharaoh*, who when
one plague was past, thought himself safe
enough from that or any other: So when
one fit of sickness is past, we look for no
more, but dream of a long time of ease, and
peace, and health before us: but we should
be rather like one that is sick of an *Ague*,
who when the fit is over, eats, drinks, and
is merry, but yet he looks for another fit:
So Sirs, is a sickness over and past? why,
I do not deny but that God who hath given
thee a stomach, and provided food, would
have thee to eat and drink; and he that hath
created matter for thy delight, and made
thee a risible creature, doth allow thee to
be merry and cheerful; yet look for ano-
ther fit: sickness is like to come again, and
death will be sure to come shortly; there-
fore take heed of security.

Lastly, that heed of pride and vain-
glory; this was the sin of good *Hezekiah*,
of whom we read, that after he was reco-
vered from his sickness, *his heart was lifted*
up, 2 *Chron.* 22. 24, 25. and this appeared,
in that when he was courted by the King of

Babylon, he did in a bravado shew all his riches, *Isa.* 39. 2. Poor *Hezekiah*, thou wast in a better frame, when on thy sick-bed thou wast turning thy face to the wall; but we may see by this sad instance, how apt we are after a mercie and deliverance, to be puffed up with high thoughts and conceits of our selves.

The last Duty which I shall mention, is this: Be careful to perform thy sick-bed-vows and resolutions. *A vow is a solemn promise made to God, either of a duty, or of something which may further us in our duty to God.* The matter of a vow is either to do that which God commands, or to forsake sin which God forbids, or to do something to further our obedience, or to abstain from something which might be an occasion of sin, and which we may abstain from: A vow must not be of a thing unlawful; for that were as if we should promise God to hate him, or not to love him; it must be also of that which we have power to do, else we have no power to promise to do it: The nature of a vow is a promise made to God, which promise brings an obligation upon us to perform it: this promise must not be made rashly; for a vow must be the fruit of grace, and not the fruit of sin: and

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and we must not make promises to God in a passion ; yet I do not deny, but such vows must be performed ; for it's one thing sinfully to vow, and another thing to vow to sin ; in such a case we must be humbled for the manner of the vow, and graciously pay what we sinfully vow'd. It hath been the practice of the godly to make vows to God in their troubles, *Psal. 132. 1, 2. Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions ; how he swore unto the Lord, and vowed to the mighty God of Jacob.* Now Sirs, in the fear of God make conscience to perform your sick-bed-vows : Indeed, wicked men are forward to make vows when they are sick, and as forward to break them when they are well : As *Pharaoh*, when the plagues were upon him, he would let *Israel* go ; but when they were removed, his heart was hardned, and they should not go. But it is the property of a godly man to make good his vows, *Psal. 15. 4.* Hence saith *David*, *Psal. 56. 12. Thy vows are upon me, O God.* Beloved, vows are heavy things ; *David* felt them lying upon him, and pressing him to the performance of them. Vows take up a great deal of room in the soul ; they fill the conscience : when a man is tempted to do that which he hath

vowed against, his vow will be upon him presently, that he dare not do it. See what conscience David made of his vows, *Psal. 66. 13, 14. I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble, Psal. 116. 14. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.* Sirs, if you break your vows, your vows will break you. I shall conclude this in the words of *Solomon, Eccles. 5. 4, 5. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, then that thou shouldst vow, and not pay.*

So much for the Exhortation to those who are recovered from sickness.

My last Exhortation is, to exhort you to some Duties to be performed in time of sickness, which I shall lay before you in these twelve particulars.

Duty 1. Own and acknowledge the hand of God in thy visitation: as a man in a croud, that receives a blow upon his head, will presently turn about to see whence the stroke comes; so, as soon as Gods hand toucheth thee, let thy eye be upon him, and

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and labour to finde a special presence of God appearing in thy visitation. Poor soul! thou art now parted from the use of Ordinances in publick, and thou must labour to finde Sabbaths, and Sermons, and Sacraments in thy sickness; that is, thou must endeavour to finde the presence of God that appears in these Ordinances, appearing to thy soul in the aches, and troubles, and pains of a sickness. To this purpose, I have read a saying of an holy Minister of the Gospel, which he spoke on his sick-bed concerning people that were then worshipping God in publick, *Ob* (said he) *that they did now see, what I do now feel!* we have a choice example of this duty of acknowledging the hand of God in our visitation, in *Job, cap. 1.* where we read, that after he had stood still, and heard the messengers which came one upon the heels of the another, with the sad tidings of the loss of his cattel, and servants, and children; the very first thing he does, is to turn to God, and to fall down and worship him, and acknowledge his hand in his affliction, *vers. 20, 21.* so I say, So soon as ever thy disease begins, presently own, and acknowledge, and worship God, who is the cause of thy visitation; so did David, *Psal. 38.2. Thy arrows stick fast*

Christ's Power over

in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. Consider, this affliction comes from the Wisdom, and Will, and Power, and Justice of God; and by this disease he hath now chosen to come to thee, and to appear to thee; therefore labour to have thy heart filled with him, that all thy words and actions may favour of him. Hereby thou wilt see Reason against all Sin, and Reason for all Duties, and withal a ground for all comforts.

Duty 2. Labour to have thy heart filled with the thoughts of thy death and judgement: it is the great sin of many, that in their sickness strive to put the thoughts of death and judgement far from them, and labour to fill their hearts with confidence that they shall live; and so many poor wretches fall into hell before they did think they should dye. But certainly, it's the safest and wisest way, so soon as thou art assaulted with sickness, to see thy death and judgement standing before thee, and to receive *the sentence of death in thy self*, 2 Cor. 1. 9. Look upon thy disease as bringing thee to death, and after that to a judgement, which will settle thee in heaven or hell presently. As thou
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lyest on thy sick-bed, look into the other great world, where thou art entring; see in what state, place and company thou art now to all eternity to be fixt: Look into hell, and see those many millions of Devils that are chained up there: Look what a dreadful case the learned, great, rich, strong and beautiful swaggerers, ranters, and gallants of the proud, presumptuous, scornful, unbelieving, envious, secure, covetous world are now flaming in; and consider, that thou deservest to lye in the midst of them; and therefore now the greatest care of thy soul should be, how to be saved from those unquenchable flames.

Then look into heaven into thy Fathers house, and behold there *the high and lofty one dwelling in that high and holy place*, and th: Lord Jesus sitting at his right hand in glory, and an innumerable company of Angels looking him in the face; and there see a great multitude of blessed and glorified Saints: *Illic Apostolorum gloriosus chorus, illic Prophetarum exultantium numerus, illic Martyrum innumerabilis populus*: There is the glorious quire of Apostles, there is a company of triumphant Prophets, and there is an innumerable multitude of blessed Mir-

tyrs, saith Cyprian: There thou mayst see those who were upon earth, the poor, reviled, despised, afflicted, persecuted, imprisoned, banisht, hang'd, burnt Children of the most high God, whom the world could not bear; but are now happily possessed of their everlasting Kingdom, where they are filled and satisfied with the likeness and presence of God, and are singing and rejoicing with unspeakable joy to behold his glory: And then consider, Yonder is the place, wherein I am now to seek to enter. And thus let thy sickness fill thee with the deep and serious thoughts of death, judgement, and the world to come.

Duty 3. Be sure of a well-grounded Scripture-peace settled betwixt God and thy soul: It's a good saying, That *the day of death is a day of truth*: See therefore that thou hast a peace which will prove true and sound when it comes to the great trial of death and judgement. The unbeliever is not then to be tryed at the bar of his own secure and seared conscience, nor by a Jury of carnal atheistical neighbours. The Believer hath then a present appeal from the rash and false judgement of his enemies, and

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and also from the dismal sentences of his own doubting heart ; and the Cause of both is presently to go to a hearing before the judgement-seat of Christ : Now see that thy peace be settled on such a sure foundation, that thou mayst be found in safety and glory, when thou art called to appear before the Judge of quick and dead. There are two main things which may assure thy heart of peace and reconciliation with God.

1. If Christs righteousness be thy own, so that as sure as thou art a sinner in thy self, thou art righteous in and by the righteousness and obedience of Jesus Christ : See therefore that all causes agree to make this righteousness thy own.

1. Set the Lord before thy eyes, and be able to say, I know, and am surely convinced, that *God is a good God*, a living, kinde and merciful God, and that he is good to poor sinners ; by the salvation of whom, he hath chosen to make his goodness glorious to all eternity ; I know that there are *forgivenesses with him* ; that he hath a heart to *pardon iniquity, transgression and sin* ; that he is inclin'd, and ready to *pardon*, according to his infinite goodness and loving kindness ; and this goodness is the cause of all that

that great Salvation revealed in the Gospel : and I come to him , and my soul doth cleave to him, and love him; and all my expectation is from him, as he is a God of such infinite and incomprehensible goodness.

2. I know that out of this infinite goodness he hath sent Jesus Christ to me, that to me a childe is born, and to me a son is given, *Isai. 9.6.* I know surely that he came out from the Father, and I do believe that he hath sent him, *John 17. 8.* I know that the Son of God is come, and hath given me an understanding, that I might know him that is true, and I am in him that is true. This is the true God, and eternal life.

3. God hath herein commended his love *Rom. 5.8.* to my soul, in that Christ dyed for me ; and I know this true God , the Lord Jesus Christ, did in his infinite love to me, as my Surety, dye for me, and thereby satisfied Gods justice for my sins, which he bore in his body upon the tree, *1 Pet. 4. 24.* And that he loved me, and gave himself for me an offering, and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour. *Eph. 5.2.* *Gal. 2.20.*

4. I know that it is the will of God concerning me, that I should take this righteousness of Jesus Christ to be mine ;
for

For he hath commanded me to take his body as broken for me, and his Blood shed for the remission of my sins: *And this is his commandment, that I should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.* 1 Joh. 3. 23.

5. I know that God by his Spirit hath convinced me, that I am lost without Christ, and that he hath made me to see his righteousness so precious, and meritorious, and necessary for my Salvation, that I do by the power of his Spirit willingly, obediently, lovingly and joyfully receive and take this righteousness of Christ for my own, and rest onely upon it for the pardon of my sins, and for my Salvation, as it is freely offered and given by God to me in the Gospel.

Lastly, I know that God hereupon imputes this righteousness to me, and accounts it my righteousness; and that I am bound to account it my own, so as to own it, live upon it, and to glory in it: and by this righteousness God justifies me, being he is just, *and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus,* Rom. 3. 26. And thus *being justified by faith in Christs righteousness, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ,* Rom. 5. 1. And hereby I have a right

2 Pet. 3.
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right through the free grace of God to go from my sick-bed into the everlasting Kingdom of peace : And when I am called to the Judgement-seat of Christ, *being found in his righteousness, I shall be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.*

2. That thou mayst be assured of a Scripture-peace and reconciliation with God, labour to finde thy self truly joyned and united to Jesus Christ, thy whole body and soul joyned to all of Christ, so as with him to make one self, one mystical Christ, that thou mayst be able to say, As poor and weak as I lye here groaning on this bed of languishing ; yet this aking head, pale face, weak hands, feeble limbs, withered body, is all a *member of Christs body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. 5. 30. For by the grace of God I can say, that whereas I am in my self a dead plant, and as separated from Christ can doing nothing, yet by faith my heart is truly *rooted in Christ* ; and I do receive him to rule me, as my Lord, according to his will, and to teach, and every way to save me ; and my minde is set upon him, and my heart and affections do cleave, and are fastned to him ; and there comes true spirit and life from him, which spreads
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1. I can look on my sins, and finde a
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God , would crucifie them, and be revenged of
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dy and them ; and it's the greatest burden of my
h him age, that I have any thing in me, against the
t, that will and glory of so good a God, and which
r and is displeasing to him, and makes me so un-
bed of like unto him.

2. I can look at Gods Commandments ,
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ody, is them, so that they are *the very law of my*
h, and *minde* ; I account them all *holy, just and*
ace of *good* ; and they are for that reason preci-
y self ous to me, because they are against my sins :
Christ and I judge it the best work that I can do,
heart to be doing the Will of God revealed in
ceive these good Commandments.

3. I can look upon the world, and upon
rding way the Kingdoms and Country where I live ;
way upon the Kingdoms and Country where I live ;
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have all places filled with the Name, and Kingdom, and Will of Jesus Christ.

4. I look upon men, and I see amongst them a company who are separated from the world, and differ from the world, and are of another spirit, who appear and shine in the image and likeness of the most holy God, in whom there is a sweet agreement betwixt their lives and the Scriptures, and the life of Jesus Christ is manifested in them. Now my heart doth judge these the best people in the world, and to be far more excellent then their carnal Neighbours; I love and delight in them, and desire living and dying to be found with my heart joyned to them. Poor soul! if thou canst finde these things sincerely in thee, thou art certainly a part of Christ, and shalt go in peace from thy death-bed to thy head, *to sit together with him in heavenly places.*

Duty 4. If thou finde on Scripture grounds that thy sins are pardoned, and thy peace is made with God, then improve thy experience in a spiritual triumph over all the enemies of thy Salvation: Say to Death that stands daring and staring thee in the face, *O death, where*

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thy sting? And Death must answer in effect thus: When Christ laid down his life, I lost my sting; but Christ took up again his life, but I could never take up again my sting.

Ask the grave, *O grave, where is thy victory?* The grave must answer: I lost the victory, when Christ rose again from me; and I must needs give up thy precious Body, when it is called for at the resurrection of the just.

Look on the Devils, and see how Christ hath *spoiled these principalities and powers, and triumphed openly over them*, Col. 2. 15. and now rejoyce thou in the spoil: Let that be spiritually fulfilled in thee, which was spoken, Isa. 33. 23. *The lame take the prey*: Death and Devils are spoiled by Christ; and the poor, weak, sick Christian takes and triumphs in the prey: So that because of this, *Let the weak say, I am strong*, Joel 3. 10. This may make thee even to forget thy aches and pains, so that thou *shalt not say, I am sick, because the Lord hath forgiven thy iniquities*, Isa. 33. 24.

Duty 5. Having thus seen a settlement of my soul and body to all eternity, make

a godly, conscientious and seasonable settlement of thy outward estate ; this ought to be done, if it be not done before ; and if thou art in a capacity to do it : This was part of *Isaiah* his message to *Hezekiah* on his sick-bed, *Isai. 38.1. Set thy house in order, for thou shalt dye, and not live.* Now in making thy *Will*, be ruled by this principle : *Be sure that thy will be ruled by the Will of God*, that so thy last Will and Testament, which is the signification of thy will, may make it appear that thy will is in subjection to the Will of God ; and that thou doest Gods Will, when thou makest thy own will. For this purpose, observe these three Directions.

1. If thou hast got any thing unjustly, take order, so far as is possible, to make restitution ; do not dye in injustice, to go with a curse to hell thy self, and to leave the curse of God behind thee upon thy family.

2. Be full of love and faithfulness to thy Relations. Christ himself is our pattern herein, who when he was nigh unto death, commended the care of his Mother to his beloved Disciple, *John 19. 27. Then saith he to his disciple, Behold thy mother.* Let thy last Will and Testament witness that thou diest in conjugal love to thy wife ; Give her

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of the fruit of her hands, Prov. 31. ult. endeavour to make thy poor widows life as comfortable as thou canst : and although I advise not husbands to leave power in the hands of their wives to wrong and defraud their poor fatherless children ; for sad experience witnesseth, that many widows are so careful to get themselves husbands, that they grow careless of their poor children ; yet however leave no tie upon her to binde her from after-marriage ; seeing God hath made her free , do not thou leave her bound.

Again, provide so for thy children , that there be neither want, nor strife, nor emulation among them : and though I advise to nothing to prejudice the first-borns birth-right, yet I must witness against it as the great sin of many Parents, that are so ambitious to set up their Families, that they highly advance the elder brothers, and often leave the younger to be as poor as beggars, or as bad as thieves.

3. Dye in dear love to the Church of God, and to the poor, that so far as thou art able, thy last Will and Testament may favour of good will towards them. It is the wickedness of many, that they seek to make a Monopoly of the world, by ingrossing to

themselves and their families, and restraining the good and use of it from others: but every man (keeping to the rules of justice) should dispose of his estate so, as may make it most useful for Gods glory, and to be a blessing unto man: And therefore consider, that if thou expectest when thou dyest to be received into *the everlasting habitation* of Gods poor in the other world, let their lives be made somewhat more comfortable by thee in this world.

Duty 6. Use all lawful means to recover thy health; though thou art ready to dye, yet it's thy duty to endeavour to live; thy life is Gods, and he hath bound thee to keep it for him till he call for it; and thou art the Churches servant, and must not by thy sinful neglect defraud her of her right: thou hast yet need to mortifie sin, and to grow in grace, and to strengthen thy assurance of Salvation, and to lay up more treasures in heaven; and thou oughtest to use all lawful means to preserve thy life for these ends: grudge not therefore thy self wholesome and fit dyet: send for a skilful and careful Physitian, and depend upon the God of thy life in the use of them. To conclude, be ruled by this Principle: When life is

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most sweet, be willing to dye ; and when life is most bitter, be willing to live : without this, *a man lives to himself, and dyes to himself.*

Duty 7. Bear thy Visitation patiently. The Apostle pleads for this duty, though in a more general case, *Heb. 12. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence ; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the father of spirits, and live ?* As it is a most unchild-like temper in children, to carry themselves stubbornly under their fathers rod ; so it is very unchildlike for Gods children to carry themselves stubbornly under the correction of their heavenly Father : therefore yeild thy self in patient subjection to thy Father under all his chastisements. Now because patience is such a necessary, seasonable and proper Duty for a sick man, I shall press this Exhortation with some Motives, and then by some Directions teach you how to be patient.

I shall use these five Motives.

Mot. 1. Now is a special season, wherein you have great need of patience, *Heb. 10. 36.* for the greater our afflictions are, the greater is our need of patience: now

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every affliction is greater, by how much it comes nearer to a mans life; so that a man better bears afflictions in his Estate or Friends, then in his own Body: and therefore there never appeared a want of *Jobs* patience, till his body was so sore visited. Besides, there are many afflictions accompany sickness, which make our condition more grievous, and patience more necessary: as for example, our enemies are now apt to triumph in our misery. Thus they did by *David*, *Psal.* 41. 8. *An evil disease say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lyeth, he shall rise up no more:* So that we have need of patience to bear the insultings and upbraidings of our enemies: our friends also may be now estranged from us. Thus they were from *Job* and *Heman*, *Psal.* 88. 8. and *David* complains of this, *Psal.* 38. 11. *My lovers and my friends stand a loof from my sore, and my kinsmen stood afar off:* Nay, our dearest relations sometimes deal unkindly with us in this condition: This did aggravate *Jobs* misery, *Job* 19. 17. *My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated her for the childrens sake of my own body:* I begged of her, Good wife, do not forsake me now, but remember our poor children, which are gone, which

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which were the sweet pledges of our Matrimonial Love : Yet for all this (saith he) she was so nice, that she could not endure to come near my breath, which did stink, being corrupted by my disease. so that we have upon all these, and divers other considerations, great need of patience.

Mot. 2. Your patience will prove you to be compleat Christians. Thus the Apostle pleads, *Jam. 1. 4. Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* Beloved, many seem to be good Christians till they come to passive obedience ; but then they cannot endure to be wronged, or provoked, or to suffer losses, or pains in body, &c. Now here is a want in Christianity; and it is better want any where, then be wanting in godliness : but when a man can with patience bear all sufferings, he is a perfect entire Christian, and wants nothing, because he can patiently want every thing.

Mot. 3. Thy bearing thy visitation patiently, makes thy suffering to be a suffering for the sake of Christ : Perhaps thou mayst think, Oh if I had the honour to suffer banishment, imprisonment, yea death

it self for the sake of Christ, how patiently could I hear it ! But consider the answer which *Cyprian* makes to this objection, which the Christians did object in his days in a time of great sickness, *Non sanguinem vestrum Deus querit, sed fidem : God seeks not your blood, but your faith.* If you did suffer for Christ, it is not your blood and your death that pleaseth God, but the faith and patience which you exercise in your sufferings; and by these thou mayst exceedingly please God in this Visitation : And consider further, that a man doth not onely suffer for Christs sake, when he suffers for the name and truth of Christ ; though I confess it is ordinarily taken in that sence, yet there is another way of suffering for the sake of Christ, which is indeed a clearer argument of sincerity then the former, that is, when we suffer patiently for the sake of Christs Will ; so the reason of our patience and submission is, because our visitation comes from the Will of Jesus Christ ; and indeed this demonstrates that the same graces, and the same reasons, which make thee so patient under this visitation, would make thee run with patience through all the suffering which thou shouldst be called unto for the sake of Christ.

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Mot. 4. This puts a great grace upon a Christian, to lye quietly and patiently under the hand of God in sickness. *David* gives a relation of his sweet temper in the exercise of this grace, *Psal. 131. 2.* *Surely I have behaved and quieted my self as a childe that is weaned of his mother : my soul is even as a weaned childe :* As a weaned childe eats, and drinks, and plays, and sleeps quietly without the breasts ; so *David* was obedient, and quiet, and patient, and teachable under all Gods dispensations : I tell you, in the midst of all nasty and loathsome diseases, this spirit of patience puts a beauty and glory upon the very body of a Christian. *Tertulian* elegantly expresseth the comely carriage of a patient Christian under his sufferings thus : *His countenance is calm and pleasant ; his face smooth, not wrinkled with sorrow or anger ; his eye-lids let down in a cheerful manner ; his eyes cast down not with misery, but humility ; his mouth sealed with silence, &c. De patientia, cap. 15.*

Last Mot. This will be a sure proof to thee, that all thy sicknesses and misery will end in heaven, *Heb. 6. 12.* *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* Observe, all the glory of heaven is laid up in the

promises; and the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs and Saints which have dyed in all ages, are now in heaven inheriting the promises; they are enjoyning that happiness which was promised to them in the Scriptures: but how came they to inherit these promises? why through faith and patience. Now we have the same promises made to us, which they do now inherit: but how shall we come to inherit the same promises? those Saints are possessors of glory, yonder they live and reign; but how shall we do to come among them? why be followers of them; they are gone a little before you; away after them, follow their steps through faith and patience, and you shall with them inherit the promises, *Heb. 10. 36. Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

So much for the Motives. Now that you may practice this Duty, observe these five following Directions.

1. Labour by patience to keep thy soul under the Rule and Government of thy graces, *Luk. 21. 19. In your patience possess ye your souls.* By patience a man keeps the sweet possession and enjoyment of himself; by this grace it is, that a man does rule his

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spirit, Prov. 15. 32. Beloved, when the body is troubled, it's an hard thing to rule the soul, to keep the affections, passions, thoughts, words, looks, actions in their place; much covetousness, pride, unbelief, anger, and discontent, are apt to work, and disturb, and displace the soul at such a time: Now a patient man bears off his troubles by the strength of his graces, and the strength of all graces work in patience; he believes patiently, hopes patiently, and lyes patiently under the will of God, loving and rejoicing in him; so that patience keeps the soul from sinking, and it keeps corruption from rising, and keeps all graces working, so that the heart is full of duty, when it is full of patience; and hereby the heart is established and settled in a holy, even, cheerful and obedient frame under the will of God.

2. Be patient in obedience to the will of God; for it cannot be true patience, except thou bear thy affliction patiently for this reason, because it comes from the will of God: I know a sickness is not a thing it self which a natural will should chuse; but when God signifies that it's his will that thou shouldst be visited, then here comes in the work of patience, to deny thy own will, where-

whereby thou wast willing to have ease, and health, and life; and to say, I am willing to go into a sick-bed, or death-bed, to fulfil the Will of God. We have our Saviours example for this; he was innocently willing to avoid the sufferings by his created Humane Will; but looking upon them as coming from the Will of his Father, he submits his will to his Fathers; saying, *Mat. 26. 39. Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* So a childe of God may say, I am willing to have my health and life, to live in the world with my Friends and Relations, and to be a blessing to the Church of God: but if it be Gods Will that I shall be sick and dead, let me die to fulfil the Will of God, rather then live to fulfil my own will.

3. Humble and abase your selves under the Hand of God in your Visitation, *1 Pet. 5. 6. Humble your selves under the mighty hand of God.* See what a mighty Hand of God is upon thee, and humble thy self under it; the humblest Christians are always the patientest Christians. It's observeable, that the reason of *Jobs* impatience, was his too high thoughts of himself, and his too low thoughts of God: and therefore observe how God pleads with him, *Job 38.*

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3. *Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? What prating fellow is this, that by his ignorant talk darkens my Wisdom, and Justice, and Providence? Because thou didst challenge me to dispute with thee, and didst promise to answer me, Job 13. 22. Gird up now thy reins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.* Now when God had said the following words demonstrated his infinite power and wisdom in the works of Creation and Providence, *Job* is thereupon so deeply convinced of the Majesty of God, and of the vanity of himself, that he resolves for ever after to be humble, patient and silent, *Job* 40. 4, 5. *Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken (like a fool as I was) but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.*

4. Consider the desert of thy sins; it will make thee bear patiently what thou sufferest, to consider what thou deserveest. It was a favourable saying of a good man being then tortured with the pain of sickness; *Oh* (saith he) *this is not Hell.* He that believes what Hell is, and knows that he deserves to be there, will see great reason

son to lye patiently under the greatest pains of the most tormenting sickness, and to resolve with the Prophet, *Micah 7. 9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.*

Lastly, Wait by patience for a comfortable issue out of thy sickness, *James 1. 4. Let patience have her perfect work.* Some are patient a while, and after fly into passion and discontent: but as long as there is any work for patience, let her have her perfect work, *James 5. 7. Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.* Sirs, the Lord is coming, and he will put an end to sickness and death when he comes: Consider what the Lord will do to thy body and soul at his coming, and be patient till his coming; for when thou meetest him, thou wilt see he did not stay too long.

It's observeable, that God and his people have both the same end: Thy great end is the glory of God, and the salvation of thy self, and of all Gods Church; and this now is Gods end: But God hath set thee thy way to this end, and he hath set and appointed to himself his own way. Now Gods way is not as thy way: Thou thinkest such and such a way were best to make God glorious, and his Church happy;

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case, thou mayst think it is the best way
for Gods glory, and for thy family, and for
thy self, for thee to enjoy thy health and
life, &c. but Gods way is to bring thee
to sickness and death: Well, what must be
done in this case? *Ans^w.* Still keep thy
heart fixt upon thy glorious end; and do
thou follow thy way of duty, and patient-
ly wait upon, and submit unto God in his
way of providence; and thou shalt finde,
that at the last Gods working in his way
of providence, and thy keeping to thy way
of duty, will meet in the same end, viz.
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Duty 8. In sickness give good counsel to
thy Friends about thee: See how *Moses*
stands over Eternity, and preacheth to the
Israelites, Deut. 32. See also the language
of a dying King to his Successor, 1 *Chron.*
28. 9. *Thou, Solomon my son, know thou
the God of thy Father, and serve him with a
perfect heart, and with a willing mind.* See
again the solemn charge of the dying A-
postle to *Timothy*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *I charge
thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus
Christ,*

Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and long suffering. And you know the farewell-Sermon of our dying Lord Job. 14. 15, 16. It was a sweet and favoury saying of Hyperius to his little Son that stood by his death-bed; *Disce mi fili mandata Domini, & ipse enutriet te: Learn my child the commandments of the Lord, and he will nourish thee.*

Let thy last words be such that may favour of a heart breathing after the salvation of those that are to come after thee: Thou art now standing at the end of all worldly perfections; thy stomach is almost closed for ever, thy sleep is even gone for ever; thou art at the end of all the pleasures of sin, at the end of all worldly enjoyments, of all the Ordinances and duties of this life, and thou hast now but a step to that judgment which will quickly resolve all thy thoughts about thy Eternal Estate: Now thou see'st what a vanity man is, what a lye the world is, what a cheat sin is, what a lost wretch an unbeliever is, what a precious Jewel a Saint is, what a treasure grace is, what a pearl the Gospel

is, what a Father God is, what a Saviour Christ is, what a place Hell is, what a portion Heaven is : Now thou canst speak of these things with more faith, and heart, and feeling, then ever : thy yoke-fellow, children, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbours, have now more then ever their hearts and ears open to thee; and who knows what a saving work a savoury word from one that is just in his flight to Eternity may make ! and therefore speak so, as one that earnestly desires, that the meeting between thee, and all thy sad friends about thee, may be joyful, when you come together next.

9. Pray earnestly, that as long as thou hast a gasp to breathe, it may appear, that thou hast a spirit to pray. I dare be bold to say, Thou mayst gain more good by one spiritual breathing in prayer, then the most prosperous Merchant can by the most successful returns of a whole Age.

Pray with obedient submission to Gods Will, that he will restore thee to health and life : Beg of God to spare thee a little; this will sweeten health and life to thee, when it is given as a fruit of prayer, if thou livest; and it will be a sweet testimony,

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ny, that thou dost not leave the world in discontent, if thou diest.

Pray for everlasting salvation : See how many miscarry at death , and what a great crowd of Men and Women will stand at the left hand of Christ at the day of Judgment ; and beg of God , that for his great Names sake , and for the sake of Christs obedience , thou mayst finde mercy at those great daies : Let thy Faith and Hope be never so strong , and thy experiences never so sweet , and thy evidences never so clear , yet thou mayst see reason and need enough of these prayers.

Pray earnestly for the Militant Church, and particularly for that part of it to which thou hast a more special Relation : Believe what a Father , and Head , and Husband, and Saviour , the Church hath ; and what a Body ; and Spouse ; and Family , the Church is ; and what an everlasting Covenant of Grace there is betwixt God and his Church ; and what a multitude of mighty, subtil, cruel, implacable Devils and men there are against the Church ; and that yet in despite of all, Christ will present it to himself *a glorious Church*. It is very good on thy sick bed to set this Body , the Church,

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world in Church, before thee, to let thy thoughts walk about Sion, and go round about her, and tell the Towers thereof; and to mark well her Bulwarks, and consider her Palaces, &c. Psal. 48. 12, 13. And see thy self of this blessed Flock and Family: and so with all thy might pray for this Church. Thus dying Moses cries to God for his Church, Numb. 27. 16, 17. *Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them; and which may go in before them; and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd.*

Church, Pray for thy Family, Friends and Relations. The prayer of Cruciger in his sickness is worthy of our imitation: *Fac meos Orphanos vasa misericordiae*; Lord, make my poor Orphans Vessels of Mercy. Beg of God not to charge thy sins upon thy house, and that he will graciously supply the want of thee when thou art gone.

Pray that thy name, graces, counsel, reproofs, and example, may be blessed, to Gods glory, and the good of others; that by them, even when thou art dead, thou mayst be speaking. Heb. 11. 4.

Pray also for thy enemies: You know the practice

practice of Christ, and Stephen, who almost breathed out their last gasps in prayer for their enemies. *Tertullian* makes love to enemies, to be a property peculiar to Christians; saying, *Amicos diligere omnium est, inimicos autem solum Christianorum*: All men may love their friends, but none but Christians can love their enemies, ad Scapulum, cap. 1. Every Christian should be always much in that, which will prove him to be a Christian; especially now thou art dying, and going to heaven, be found with thy heart filled with love to, and prayer for thy enemies, that thou mayst appear to be a childe of thy Father which is in heaven, Mat. 5. 45. Set before thy heart thy most malicious, spiteful, and injurious enemy: consider, he is a man made after the Image of the same God with thy self: consider what the Word threatens against him, and into what a Hell he is falling, and what a blessed instrument he may be, if God would please to convert him; and labour to finde thy soul filled with love and compassion towards him, which will cause in thee strong desires after his everlasting Salvation; and do thou earnestly offer up these desires by prayer unto God: this will be a sweet testimony of thy integrity, and will be a service

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vice of a sweet savour to God in Christ; and perhaps God may in answer to thy prayers, give eternal life to thy poor miserable enemy.

Duty 10. Fasten by faith on some choice place of Scripture: When Mr. *John Knox* lay dying, he called some about him to read *Joh. 17.* For, saith he, *there I cast my anchor*: and he also called for *1 Cor. 15.* and when it was read, he cries, *Oh the sweet and saving comfort which God hath refreshed my soul with, out of this chapter!* and I have heard it reported, that when holy and learned Mr. *Blake* lay on his death-bed, he fastned on those words, *Act. 13. 39.* *By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses*: And cries out, *I'll dye with this, I'll dye with this.* Thus I say, Settle thy soul upon some Scripture which settles pardon of sin and salvation upon thee; this will be a sweet evidence that thou dyest in faith: And thus believing the promises whilst thou livest, thou shalt be sure to inherit the promises when thou dyest.

Duty 11. Be willing in obedience to God

to dye; this is *to die to the Lord*, Rom. 14. 18. I tell you, a man may with courage and resolution burn at a stake; and men burn him to death, because of his profession of the truth of Christ; and yet this is but the height of hypocrisie, and he may hereby *dye to himself*: And though men may commend him for a Saint, yet God may justly condemn him for an hypocrite: but he that willingly yeilds himself to dye in obedience to God, dyes in the Lord, and to the Lord, and graciously offers up his life as a sacrifice of a sweet savour to God in Christ. Consider further, thou dost hereby graciously finish all passive and active obedience; thou now leavest thy Country, and Estate, and Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, to fulfill the will of God. So also, all that thou hast been doing by Prayer, Meditation, Sacraments, Sabbaths, &c. thou willingly yeildest to have finisht by death; thou art heartily willing that the old man of sin be put off by death for ever, and that the new man of holiness be put on for ever: Consider thou hast often pray'd to be filled with the likeness and presence of God; which can never be till death. Christ hath prayed *that thou mayst be where he is, that thou mayst*
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see his glory, Joh. 17. 24. and this can never be till thou dyest ; therefore, I say, be willing to dye : call upon the sad mourners about thee, saying to them as *Jacob* to *Joseph*, Gen. 46. 30. *Let me dye.* Dear yokefellow, let me dye ; sweet children, let me dye ; my pleasant *Jonathans*, let me dye : and turn thy face to God, and say with *Simeon*, Luk. 2. 29. *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.*

Lastly, Commend thy soul to God ; this is an act of a Believer, whereby he freely gives up himself to God and Christ as his right and due to glorifie and to enjoy him for ever in heaven : Now by giving up thy soul to God, thou givest up thy body too ; for the body will be sure to follow the soul ; if the soul go to hell, the body must go thither too ; if the soul go to heaven, the body must be glorified there too : therefore see God, as it were, standing by thy bed-side, saying to thee, *My son, give me* Prov. 23. *thy heart : give me thy soul, give it me* 26. *from sin and self ; give it me from the world and devils ; give it me, for I made it, and bought it, and I will save it : Oh then give it up, and commend it to God : See the infinite and unchangeable love and mercy*

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mercy of God in Christ to thy soul, and be-
lieve that with this love he will graciously
and lovingly receive thy soul: and see
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fullness of holiness, and joy, and glory he
will settle it for ever: See that thy soul be
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ken, ignorant, proud, covetous, unbelieving
soul; but a believing, loving, holy, hum-
ble soul: See thy soul cloathed with Christs
righteousness, and as such, give it up to
God to be blessed and glorified for ever
in Heaven, saying, *Father, into thy hands I
commit my spirit.*

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